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THE WAY OF SALVATION.

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THE WAY OF SALVATION:

A Priest's Appeal to Holy Scripture.

SEVEN INSTRUCTIONS,
GIVEN IN SEVERAL LINCOLNSHIRE VILLAGES
DURING THE YEARS 1872 & 73.

BY

H. W. HOLDEN,

CURATE OF GRASBY, BRIGG.

Author of 'John Wesley in Company with High-Churchmen;' &c.

For the Defence of the Gospel I am set.—Philip. i. 17.

Second Thousand.

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TO

THAT INCREASING NUMBER OF

MISSION PRIESTS,

WHO LIVE FOR

THE *EXTENSION* OF

A *DEEPENED* SPIRITUAL LIFE:

OF WHOM,

(WITHOUT PERMISSION,)

I NAME ONE

WHO HAS WON FOR HIMSELF MUCH LOVE,

THE REV. C. W. FURSE,

(LATE VICAR OF STAINES,)

I Dedicate

VERY GRATEFULLY

THIS LITTLE VOLUME.

469435

NOTIFICATION.—*My purpose in preparing these Instructions has been to make the 'wild' notions which are imported into every parish, and by which all suffer, bring forth the truth, by grafting the truth upon them. And also, to show, in the face of an intolerant Evangelicalism with earthly force at its back, that its own traditionary system, when tested by Scripture, breaks down in the very points on which its credit hangs.*

PREFACE.

THE Subjects here brought together, and forming one group by natural affinity, are the most momentous that can engage human attention. They are touching 'the Common Salvation,' the Purchase of the Passion, in its personal aspect—How it can be free to operate for the benefit of *the individual.* They come home once to all—once to every man, as he becomes conscious of sin and of guilt before GOD. They recur as he lies on his dying bed, conscious of the 'vanity' written on all earthly things. At no time can they wait long for a plain answer; and in another place than the Parish Church they get a plain answer, given without hesitancy, and often with a slap at the teaching which is supposed to be given *there.* We do not complain that such answer is different from ours, nor at the lack of charity which even so should attend it. Both are,

in truth, but part of the heavy price there is to pay for 'our unhappy divisions'. Indeed the same difference, and with even a greater unkindness of spirit, is sometimes found in our own Communion, in what is known as the *Evangelical* school of Theology. But what is most unendurable and cause for unceasing grief, is that, in this strife of tongues, souls should suffer eternal loss—that GOD'S message should come with two voices, each contradicted by the other, to the sinner who asks for direction, it may be, within a few paces of the grave.

In presenting these Subjects answered according to the mind of the Church, and taking account also of the differences therefrom, I do it in a spirit of love, of prayer, and of earnest desire where truth is so precious that truth may be brought to all. Where truth is presented and received, there *two* are the gainers, and both may rejoice together.

It is not my fault that a strong *negative* is given to the prevailing and popular teaching, everywhere without the Church, and, as aforesaid, in some instances within. In the material there is nothing new —nothing of my own for which I might seem to be

claiming something which belongs not equally to my humblest brother. What is to be credited to me is only the manner and form of the casting. For all else, Scripture is the fruitful source. To That, out of respect to those who can acknowledge no other teacher, I have confined myself. For any word that may have escaped me which seems too strong or in any wise harsh, I hereby offer my most humble apology. And, in return, ask for prayers to be joined with mine to the Ever-blessed SPIRIT that whatever is pleasing to Him may live and bring forth fruit. May the rest perish.

H. W. H.

Grasby.
EASTER, 1874.

O LORD, Who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; Send Thy HOLY GHOST, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee: Grant this for Thine Only Son JESUS CHRIST'S sake. AMEN.

O GOD, the Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace; Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly Union and Concord: that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our Calling, one LORD, one Faith, one Baptism, one GOD and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee; through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. AMEN.

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[*Ad majorem gloriam* DEI.]

I.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

INSTRUCTION.—That this Inquiry is not truly met by returning to all Persons one and the same Answer.

Men and brethren, What shall we do?—Acts, ii. 37.

If, on my looking on your many upturned faces, you were, with one mouth, to ask me, 'What shall we do to be saved?' I could not return to your question one simple straightforward answer. 'A strange confession,' you say, 'for a minister to make! it shows how little you really know of the Gospel plan of salvation.' I *know* that this is the thought some of you are thinking: but I cannot help it; and I will give you some good reasons for

what I say, by-and-by. I know, very well, there are many that could; at all events, that would do so; that have one short sharp answer for every inquiry of the kind—the answer they at once make to all sorts of persons. None need wait a minute if only they will ask them: it is ready, and they have it at once, and it is always the same. I know, quite well, too, that it places us oftentimes at an immense disadvantage: it seems, while others are speaking with the greatest confidence and we are silent, as if we did not feel quite sure ourselves; as if we were in the presence of a "*master* in Israel"—although he a poor unlettered man, and we—with all our book-learning and college-education, needed yet to be taught. Now I have seen this, and I have read this in the faces of those who have been standing by. And yet, I say again, candidly and plainly, I couldn't: I couldn't return to this very important question, What shall we do to be saved? one simple direct answer, that would serve all alike. And, my brethren, for this very good reason—*because the Scriptures do not so teach me:* the Apostles did not give the same answer to all; our Blessed LORD did not give the same answer to all. Their examples are certainly what we ought to follow; and I say,

that their examples do not teach us to return the same answer to every one inquiring, What must I do to be saved? They always point to the same *object* — to our Blessed Lord JESUS CHRIST; but their directions are scarcely ever twice alike. Now this is a very striking fact — one which should set us thinking; for you may be sure there are very good reasons for it. The thing itself is easily proved. We have only to collect together all the answers that are given in the New Testament, or that serve as answers, and there we have it: the fact is indisputable. Before I do this, let me give you an illustration: I could point all of you to this *church;* wherever I met you, whether in the village or out of it, I could direct every one of you *how to reach* it. But if I had one word of direction on my tongue, ready to be spoken off to every man I met, I am sure, I should show myself a very untrustworthy guide. My answer, to be right, must depend altogether on where it was I found you. To one, I should say, 'Straight forward!' To another, 'Ah, you are wrong, you must turn back!' To another, 'Just hold there to the right!' With my hand I should point you all to the One Building with its spire stretching towards Heaven, *that* I should never

vary in ; but for you to reach it, my directions would have to vary just as often as your positions did. Then again, different people on the same track, and walking in the same direction, I should have to direct differently, according as the distance was longer or shorter. To one I should say, 'Right to the end of this road, and you are there.' To another who was far off, I should say, 'Keep on, this way and that way, till you get to ——, where you may inquire further.' Now suppose this is just what the Bible has done : suppose it sometimes directs one step to be taken, which, if it be taken for the whole journey instead of merely one part of it, leaves you short of where you want to be : suppose it gives one direction to one person, another to another, not in the least according to any hard-and-fast rule, but according to the exact position in which it finds him. Whatever you may say of the illustration, I say this of the fact—that Holy Scripture knows of no one direction to suit all cases ; that so far from there being one stock phrase in GOD'S Directory, in no two instances, save one, are the directions given precisely alike. Yes, 'save one'; twice was our LORD asked the question, once sincerely, once temptingly, "What shall I do to inherit

eternal life?" in both cases alike, He said, "If thou wilt enter into life, *keep the commandments.*" Again, He says, what is very much the same, "If a man *keep My saying*, he shall never see death." But then also He says, "He that *believeth in Me*," "shall never die," but "hath everlasting life." Again, "Whoso *eateth My Flesh* and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life"; "If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever". Again, "He that believeth and is *baptized* shall be saved". Thus our LORD mentions severally, believing in Him, keeping the Commandments, and the two Sacraments, as directions requiring to be observed for salvation. The Apostles do the same: "Men and brethren, What shall we do? *Repent*, and be baptized every one of you . . . for the remission of sins"; that is one direction. "Sirs, What must I do to be saved? *Believe* on the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved"; that is another. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord JESUS, and shalt believe in thine heart that GOD hath *raised Him from the dead*, thou shalt be saved"; that is one more. "Arise and be *baptized*, and wash away thy sins, calling on the Name of the LORD"; one more. "If we *confess* our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins"; one more.

"*Forgive*, and ye shall be forgiven, for if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your FATHER Which is in heaven forgive you your trespasses"; one more (and that our LORD'S). "Whosoever shall *call on the Name of the LORD* shall be saved", yet one more. Thus the Apostles do not give all men the same answer: they prescribe for salvation, repentance, faith, baptism, confession, prayer, forgiveness of others; sometimes singly, sometimes paired together, and not always the same in pair; and as often do they promise the gift of eternal life.

Now this completely settles the matter. I said what I said, only because it is so plainly true—that *Holy Scripture knows of no one direction to suit all cases:* that, neither does our LORD return the same answer to all, nor do His Apostles. The important, the unspeakably important question, "What must I do to be saved?" is rightly answered, not by one, but by a *variety* of directions, to *all* of which we must give good heed, if we mean to be saved: that is to say, repentance, faith, calling upon GOD, forgiving injuries, baptism, the Sacrament of CHRIST'S Body and Blood, obedience—keeping the Commandments—keeping CHRIST'S saying, all are alike declared needful; to all alike the promise of salvation is given:

not to any one as standing alone, of itself sufficient, but as leading on to the rest. At any one of a hundred points of the road, you might be told with perfect truth, 'This is the way, this will bring you in right at the last'. But surely not if you stopped there: only if, as you came up to the remaining points you took them, one by one, and continued in them till all was done. And in GOD'S Book, whatever directions you meet with, be sure they are there because they are necessary. You may lean to one, or you may have a preference for another; but this I say, all are alike good, all are alike true; and whether *this* one or *that* one is the direction for you, the one specially required by you for your salvation, does not in the least depend on whether you like it or not, but on whether you have already taken it or not.

You now quite understand *why* it was I said that if you were all to ask me with one mouth, What you must do to be saved, I could not return to your question one simple direct answer. GOD forbid, that I should! GOD forbid, that I should come to you with a simpler plan than that which the Apostles had! or in preaching the Gospel show myself wiser than they! I must needs be guided by Holy Scripture: it does

not, and therefore I cannot : it gives various directions, according to the case of the individual who makes inquiry ; I must do the same. Tell me where you stop short, name the point, and then by GOD'S grace I can help you—I can give you the one direction you require. But till then, I must preach to you, not one thing, but all. I must give you every direction that is needed for the whole way. I must require of you everything, lest, if omitting any, I should happen to omit *that* one, for want of which your salvation lingers. I must lay an equal stress upon each : for what am I that I should presume to weigh in my own balance the directions of The ALMIGHTY ? to say of one, ' this is of great importance,' and of another, ' this is of less ' ! And having set the whole truth before you, having given you *all* the directions which GOD has given me to give you, I must then leave it to His Blessed SPIRIT, to bring home to your heart, that *particular* one which just meets your present case. Some stop short at one point of the way, some at another, and when I know the point, I can be precise ; yes, then I can be as direct and explicit as ever an Apostle was.—To heathen man I should say, " Repent and believe the Gospel". To Unitarian or Jew, I should say, " Believe in the Lord JESUS CHRIST". To

unbaptized man, I should say, "Repent and be Baptized". Knowing where the block was, I should have no manner of hesitation whatever: I could bring out of GOD'S store, just *that* one which met his case, delightfully certain and sure that it was for his salvation. And so also of others: to the man who did believe, but who got no further, I should say, 'See that you believe not in vain; Give all diligence; "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity"'. To him who neglected the Blessed Sacrament, I should say, 'Why your soul is starving! it is without food! By the word of Him Who is the Truth, "Except you eat His Flesh and drink His Blood you have no life in you"'. And to him who rested on something else and broke the commandments, I should say, 'Why this is the very thing by which your soul is perishing! this to you is the one thing needful: "This do, and thou shalt live"; as He Who is the Life declares, "He that keepeth My saying shall never die"'. GOD forbid that I should be afraid of telling men CHRIST'S own words—that I should keep back any one of them, or in speaking it give it "an uncertain

sound"! "The whole counsel of GOD"! "*That* is profitable for you"! Just for want of this honest dealing with GOD'S Word it is, that we see on all sides of us what is so unspeakably saddening—such limping, halting, half-formed lives! such stunted, deformed, monstrous growths! such odd, contradictory, impossible professions!—of faith without works, and works without faith; of religion without charity, and love without obedience; grace without Sacraments, and Sacraments without grace! I tell you with all the emphasis I am master of, You may omit *nothing* that is contained in CHRIST'S Blessed Gospel; all is for your life; whilst living in neglect of any one of CHRIST'S ordinances or sayings, none of you can be saved: even "the least of these commandments" is "the more necessary", and "he that offends in one point is guilty of all". Yes: all is for you to hear and receive, to believe and obey: and if in any one thing you stop short, on that very thing your salvation is depending at this present moment; that is the very point on which your soul now hangs between life and death! *Believe* it, and be saved: *do* it, and live!

What is this point? Where in the way is it that you stop short? I can do you no greater service

than help you to determine that. I will put some questions to you: You answer them; to yourselves and to GOD. And may the BLESSED ONE, Whose we are, send His HOLY SPIRIT upon us that all may be done rightly! Do you then *believe*, in your heart believe, in the Lord JESUS CHRIST, Son of GOD and Son of Mary?—not, mark you, in any one thing, that He has done, does do, or will do—but in HIM, Himself, as the FATHER hath revealed Him? I trust you all do, stedfastly, and in your heart, so believe. But, if you do not, this is the first step for you to take: "I am the Way: no man cometh unto the FATHER but by Me". "He that believeth . . . shall be saved"; "he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the Only-begotten SON of GOD". Then, does your faith in Him lead you to *repentance?* do you truly and in your heart repent of all your sins, past or present? Do you break them off? at all events is it your mind and struggle to break them off? "Wash you; make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well": this also is a necessary direction in the way. The Baptist, the Blessed SAVIOUR Himself, the Apostles, all laid down this

direction as the beginning: the Baptist—"Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; our LORD—"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; the Apostles—"and they went out and preached that men should repent". Repentance and turning to the LORD has the promise of salvation; it is that without which no soul of man can live. Then do you *call upon* Him, earnestly call upon Him for your salvation? "JESUS of Nazareth passeth by," able and willing He is to save you. Are you in good earnest calling upon Him—instant in prayer and in the way of grace? this also is a necessary step, and has this promise, "Whosoever shall call on the Name of the LORD shall be saved". And coming, asking pardon of the LORD for your own sins, do you *forgive* the sins of others, committed against you? You do not? Ah, there is no pardon for thee! No; not though thou seek it carefully and with tears. He has said, indeed, "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find"; but He has a previous word for thee: though thou come and lay before Him a broken and contrite heart, He says, "Leave there thy gift, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift". "Forgive, and ye shall be for-

given": forgive not, and ye shall not be forgiven; "for with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again". No one may expect to be saved who does not forgive his brother: one direction is the direction for him, "Forgive, and thou shalt be forgiven". Then do you in another respect make perfect your repentance by "works that are meet for" it?—Do you *confess* your sins? not, that you are a sinner; that is quite a different thing, and well known to every one; but do you confess your *sins?* Those whom the Baptist called to repentance, came to him "confessing their sins"; those also whom the Apostles called, "came, and confessed, and showed their deeds". Do you do the same? "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins": there is the promise: whether it will be fulfilled to you, as well without the priest whom GOD has sent to you as with, is a very presumptuous speculation.[1] Com-

[1] It will be something to parallel this passage with one to the same effect by so unexceptionable a spiritual guide as Richard Baxter, the eminent Puritan; and that it should be found quoted with approval in the leading organ of the Wesleyan Methodists will not detract from its value:—"Mr. Baxter, after long experience and the maturest reflection, was so persuaded of the necessity of such assistance, as to recommend it

mon reverence to GOD at once says, No! and nobody in the world who says, Yes, can produce his authority for saying so. If the sinners of "Jerusalem and all Judea", who came to John's baptism, had not come to him "confessing their sins", never, by his ministration, would they have received "remission of sins"; something would have been wanting to their repentance. The Pharisees and Sadducees did come making no confession, and them he sent empty away: they, too, might have had the blessing, but missed it. The one thing for you to know, is, How you may be made most safe: the direction, 'Confess your sins', concerns nothing less than your eternal salvation: and whatever touches *that* must be in every way fulfilled; nothing that can be done may be left undone. GOD does require more than confession in private, to Himself alone: in innu-

to all penitents, in the most pressing terms. 'Never,' says he, 'expect that all thy books or sermons, thy prayers or meditations, should serve thy turn, without the advice and counsel of thy pastor; for that were devising to prove GOD'S officers needless to His Church.' "An expression of the celebrated Ostervald is somewhat stronger: 'It is certain,' says he, 'that multitudes perish for want of laying themselves open to their spiritual physician.'" *The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, xix. p. 130.

merable instances which might be mentioned, He requires confession to His Minister who is acting for Him; in others, to the Society of which in the order of His grace we are members. If you reject His Minister you reject Him[1] (the words are His, not mine); if you resist His Society, whether civil or spiritual, you resist the ordinance of GOD, and says S. Paul, "they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation". Suppose, now, that the wretched man who at this moment lies in —— Castle, charged with two murders, kept silence! Suppose he made no confession! What would the Country think of his repentance? Would it be all that it ought to be, or not? I should like to see the preacher who would dare tell him that confession to GOD alone, in private, was all that is required for his salvation. And if not, Why not? But is this 'not to the point'? Suppose ye that he is a sinner above all sinners because he suffers such things—imprisonment and the extreme penalty of the law? I tell you nay: heinous as his sins are, they are not greater than yours: for every sin you commit, the penalty is death: and his sin against society is not greater,

[1] S. Luke, x. 16; S. John, xiii. 20.

or more detrimental, than yours against the spiritual Society, the Church, of which you are members: he destroys the body; you, in corrupting others, destroy both body and soul in hell.

Confession—such as GOD requires (whether to a priest or no)—forgiveness of others, prayer and calling upon GOD, repentance and faith, each is alike necessary to salvation: whilst holding back from any one of them you cannot be saved, nor even take the first step in the way of safety. I should want a new Revelation before I could preach to you any other Gospel than this—before I could say, as some preachers do, 'Believe only, and yours is Heaven'. Faith without works! Faith without repentance! Faith without prayer!—what a mockery of GOD! Faith while you cloak your sins! Faith while you hate your neighbours!—what a monstrous self-deceit. Faith, I know, has the promise; but so also have the others; each of them in its turn; not any one more than another; nor any one by itself alone: but each as it leads to and includes the rest. Then where is it that you stop short? tell me *which* of these requirements it is that you disregard; and I will tell you, at once and in one word, What it is you must do in order to be saved.

These are the *conditions* to be observed by you, before you may even ask for the promise to be fulfilled. Unless you come repenting of and confessing your sins, unless you come in charity with your neighbours, unless you come in prayer and faith, in vain do you come at all. But if you come as a sinner is bound to come, *How, then, is the promise to be fulfilled to you?* This, plainly, is something more—a step further on in the inquiry, and at the end of a sermon it can only be answered in a few words. Well: you have the promise in hand; that now is *yours;* and what you want next is the fulfilment of the promise. Clearly, you cannot fulfil it for yourself. You can, GOD helping you, pray for yourself, repent for yourself, believe for yourself, but the promise given to these, you cannot, I say, in any part, fulfil for yourself. What is GOD'S, GOD must give: and in whatever way He offers it, in the same you must humbly and thankfully receive it. How, then, and in what way, may you receive the blessing? —that is the question—and the exact answer depends on what particular blessing it is that you seek. Is it Remission of Sins? that, if you have not already been baptized, will be fulfilled to you in Baptism. GOD cries aloud, "Repent, and be baptized every one

of you in the Name of the LORD JESUS for the remission of sins"; "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the Name of the LORD." And the Church, in faithful echo, confesses evermore, "One Baptism for the remission of sins". In that cleansing flood, by the power of Him Who gives command, your flesh, new-born, comes again to you as the flesh of a little child. But if, as I fear is most likely, you have once been baptized, and, since then, have sinned long and greatly, What in that case must you do? Oh, you must hear His own sweet voice absolving you in the voice of His Minister; for you He ordained this channel, that, repenting, you might receive yet again, remission of all your sins: "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them"; "he that heareth you, heareth ME"; Yes, the voice is His, now as of old, and it comes with instant power to the unclean. Or, is it a conscious want of spiritual life that you deplore?—coldness, barrenness, dreary desolation within! 'Life; Life more abundantly!' is that your cry? Then listen again to your SAVIOUR'S words for the reason and the remedy: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the SON OF MAN, and drink His Blood, ye

have no life in you". The Sacrament of CHRIST'S Body and Blood is to you the fount of life; His Flesh is meat indeed, His Blood is drink indeed, even His own Very Self, which being eaten of, is Life in you: "he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me". If you *do* come to Him in the Blessed Sacrament, and yet receive not—ah! then be sure that the fault is in you, only in you. Examine yourself truly: be watchful, be earnest, be diligent; and come again, and again and again, with more faith, more prayer, more sorrow for sin; and as surely as there is a GOD in heaven, and that GOD your SAVIOUR, so surely will you receive, in full measure, pressed down, and running over, the very blessing you look for.

II.

CONVERSION.

INSTRUCTION.—That Conversion is the Scripture Equivalent of Repentance, and does not include Pardon and the Washing-away of sin.

Repent and be Converted.—Acts, iii. 19.

I NOW desire, my dear brethren, as in the presence of GOD, to give you a few plain instructions about CONVERSION. And may He help me to speak, and dispose you to hear, in a way which will help forward our salvation, and be to His honour and glory. *Conversion:* it is a word which has been a great deal abused, which occurs but seldom in the sayings of our LORD or the writings of His Apostles, and which we could do altogether without. But it has a good use nevertheless; and because it is so commonly used, both properly and improperly,

it is important we should have right ideas about it. First, then, What does the word mean, exactly? and mind you, unless we are exact we shall come to no right knowledge of anything. What, then, does it mean exactly? A converted man does not mean a good man, or a pardoned man, or a man whose sins have been washed away: the truly converted man may be none of these; the sins of a whole life may be upon him, a burden intolerable, too heavy to be borne. It means of a man, just what you mean, when you use the word of a *thing:* when you speak of converting a thing, or of its being converted, you always mean turning the thing from its old use unto a new one: you mean that and nothing more than that; you express hereby nothing as to its quality, present or future; you only say of the article that it stands for a new purpose now, instead of the old one it used to do: that is its conversion. Exactly so. And that is what it means of the *man:* a converted man is a man who has been doing the devil's service, and is now turned to the service of GOD: and if he has made the change heartily and sincerely, such a man, whoever he is, is truly converted. He may not yet have received his pardon for the past, he

may not yet have received the necessary cleansing from his sins; but whatever else he is not, this one thing he is—he is *converted.*

Now, I said, what no doubt in some of your ears sounded strange, that we could do very well without the word. What! without Conversion? No, my brethren, GOD forbid. The Good SPIRIT convert every one of you! and may you know no rest, day or night, till in heart and life, you have altogether turned to the Blessed SAVIOUR Who died for you. The *thing* we must have, but the *name* we need not; and for this plain reason, because there is another name which stands equally for it: and when two names stand for the same thing, there is this disadvantage, that oftentimes we perplex ourselves, and other people, with differences which do not exist: that name is Repentance. Repentance and Conversion stand for the same thing, and in Holy Scripture mean the same thing; and that one thing is *change of mind involving change of conduct.* That man repents, who, seeing the sinfulness of his past life, turns to GOD from it, with loathing and sorrow — that man is converted. Repentance is nothing less than this, Conversion is nothing more. No doubt, if we could cut the whole thing in two,

we should get two halves—the sorrow, and the turning; and then the former would be the sinner's repentance, the latter his conversion: but then we cannot cut it in two; that would be the loss of both; without the other, the former would not be repentance, the latter would not be conversion. A man who finds he is on the wrong road—the road of sin and death, does not truly repent or change his mind, unless he turns from it: if he does turn from it, he is converted; his back is turned against that which his face was towards, and his face is now set towards that which before he had turned his back to. This illustrates the Scriptural usage of the two words. "In the LORD", neither is repentance without conversion, neither conversion without repentance. Either expresses one motion on the part of the sinner, though both mind and act go to form it: subject to dissection indeed, but in life never to be divided. From sin unto GOD—that is conversion; with 'a broken and contrite heart'—that is repentance: either so necessarily implies and involves the other, that Holy Scripture puts no difference between them; and where it makes no distinction, we may not make any.

Now, think of one or two Scripture instances. A great change came over Saul on his way to Damascus; GOD gave him a changed mind: that was his repentance, that was his conversion. Whichever you prefer to call it, the thing was one — an entire change of mind: he who started for Damascus full of fury, arrived at it like a lamb; with his mind, temper, purpose, wholly changed. And yet, (and mark this especially) a converted man though he was, Saul was yet *in his sins;* not yet had he been cleansed from them. It was on the third day after, that Ananias, whom GOD had instructed, said, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the Name of the LORD." Conversion and Repentance are the same thing: conversion and pardon are not the same; conversion and cleansing are not the same. S. Paul was converted in the way; he received pardon and cleansing in Baptism three days after. Now remember this, and it will be a help to you in the way of salvation, and keep you from falling into many terrible mistakes, which not a few people, in these days, do fall into.

But we will now take a second illustration from Scripture. By the parable of the Prodigal Son our Blessed SAVIOUR has shown us the steps of our de-

parture from our FATHER'S house, and our return to Him again, when by His grace we have been brought to a sounder mind. The turning point in his erring course was, as our SAVIOUR expresses it, "when he came to himself," and said, "I will arise and go to my Father." That was his repentance, that was his conversion: it would not have been repentance, unless the deed had been as good as the will; it would not have been conversion, unless the will had been as good as the deed. *The whole change wrought,* which turned his steps from the swine towards his Father, and his craving for the husks which the swine did eat to his desire for bread in his Father's house, is a change which is Scripturally expressed by the word Repentance, or Conversion, by either word alike. But now mark here again also: truly penitent though he was, truly converted though he was, (and it is the change which must be brought to every sinner,) he had, as yet, received no kiss of reconciliation, his soiled garments had not yet been stripped off for the best robe, the hunger of his soul had not yet been appeased by the feast of fat things. These blessings were surely his in his Father's mind, but not yet in his own actual possession. Now both these

clear instances go to show, (and the whole of Scripture, in letter as in spirit, is in perfect agreement with them,) 1st, that Repentance and Conversion are one and the same grace and gift of GOD; at least, that whatever distinction we can draw in our own mind, it does not enter into Holy Scripture; whatever we may attach to one word rather than the other, practically, and for all intents and purposes, they are the same: as two parts of one thing may be regarded apart, but in use and value are one. And 2ndly, that this particular working of GOD'S Blessed SPIRIT, though it has the *promise* of pardon and the washing away of sin, yet it does not carry these further and fuller graces *within it*, so as to make them at once ours; but, rather, creates fitness and capacity for our receiving them, through means which CHRIST, for that purpose, has specially ordained. S. Paul, as we have seen, did not until the third day after his conversion receive remission and the cleansing away of all his sins: for these blessings he was told that he must be baptized. And the Prodigal Son, in a parable which must have been so drawn as to instruct us rightly, had his conversion separated by both space and time from his reconciliation

and cleansing: when the first was complete, the second was but humbly hoped for. Certainly, the very last thing he would have done (on the strength of his being converted) would be, to assert any right or claim to them: still less, could he think of them as already his.

All this is directly contrary to the commonly received opinions on the subject, extolled especially amongst those Denominations of professing Christians, who, separating themselves from the Church, are apt to fancy, frequently to boast, that they alone possess the preaching of a pure Gospel: and if not sufficient to convince them of their errors, should at all events be sufficient to make us stand fast in the truth. Our Dissenting brethren (whom GOD bless) do hold that Repentance and Conversion are two distinct things—that a man may repent, and yet never be converted: although not a single verse, not one solitary example in the Bible, can they point to, in which the two, were, for one moment, divided. In Holy Scripture, the two always go together; or rather, the two terms are used, sometimes together as in the text,[1] but more

[1] Indicating the two sides of it—active and passive, human and divine.

frequently, singly, now one, now the other, for the same thing—that sorrowful turning from the sins of a past life unto GOD, "FATHER, I am no more worthy to be called Thy son: make me as one of Thy hired servants", without which no sinner can live. David, Mary Magdalen, Zacchæus, the penitent Thief on the cross, the converted Saul of Tarsus, are all instances: this change in them is sometimes spoken of by the one name, sometimes by the other, but never is it regarded the *less*, because it is called Repentance, or the *greater*, because it is called Conversion. Did the Baptist mean anything less than conversion, when he came preaching repentance?[1] Did our LORD mean anything less, when He said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"? would anything less satisfy His inexorable decree, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"? The Repentance which S. Peter preached to the Jews, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you", was not this fulfilled when of them "a great number believed, and *turned unto the LORD*"?[2] And reversely, the Conversion which S. Paul preached to the Gentiles, that they "should turn from these vanities

[1] S. Luke, i. 17. [2] Acts, ii. 38; Acts, xi. 21.

(worship of idols) unto the Living GOD", was it not the grace which GOD granted, when He "also to the Gentiles granted *repentance unto life*"?[1] If a man may be truly penitent and yet be unconverted, isn't it a remarkable thing, nay, isn't it a most lamentable thing that in Holy Scripture, which is our guide in all things necessary to salvation, never is the penitent told that he needs yet to be converted; never are we exhorted to go on from repentance unto conversion; never is conversion set forth to us as a fuller, further, grace.[2] *In the Bible throughout, the penitent man is regarded as a converted man, the converted man as simply a man who has repented.* Most anxious am I, my brethren, that you should see this, and know this: for not only do I fear lest you should live and die without being truly converted, but I fear very much, and have reason to fear, lest, being penitent, and turning to GOD with all your power and will, you should, by the false teaching of the times, be led to *wait* for conversion, as some fuller and further blessing:

[1] Acts, xiv. 15; Acts, xi. 18. With Acts, xiv. 15, compare also Acts, xvii. 29, 30.

[2] To be won by the wrestling of faith and prayer.

which you are told you must experience, before you can serve GOD acceptably, with gladness and holy fear: teaching as pernicious as it is false: in this vale of misery are kept thousands of truly converted souls, waiting for a conversion which by the goodness of GOD they already have. What is the consequence? Why that thousands never attain to this imaginary thing, and in consequence fall back and are engulfed by the world, and live henceforth without God and without hope; and that thousands more, who at some time are led to suppose they *do* attain unto it, at once thereupon conclude that NOW *they are saved!* at length the great work is done! and that nothing henceforth remains, but to hold fast this the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end. In the Name of my MASTER, and for His dear sake, I do protest, with all the energy of my being, against such an unscriptural figment! Whether for those who succeed—to be *puffed up*, or for those who fail in the attempt—to *fall*, I can conceive of nothing more hurtful to souls, for whom CHRIST died.

Now take to yourselves two things: one for comfort, and one for anxious concern. And first, one for comfort. If, my brother, you are penitent, if

you have changed your mind as to what you shall do, if you are now turning with shame and sorrow from the sins of your past days unto GOD, that by His grace you may be saved therefrom for the future—then you *are converted;* if you do thus truly repent, you are *a truly converted man.* Blessed be GOD that I can assure you of this: pray, if you will, daily, and as earnestly as you can, that GOD will convert you more and more, "Turn Thou me, Good LORD, and so shall I be turned"; but never let go the fact that GOD has blessed you, with a great, a priceless blessing. If your mind is changed; if your will is to serve GOD and not sin; if you do, consciously, however little your strength, turn to Him; then He has bestowed upon you the grace of Repentance, the grace of Conversion: it is yours, hold it fast, let it not go, cling to it as for your life.

And now for the second—a matter for 'anxious concern'. *Do consider,* my dear brethren, those of you who have been converted, whether you have got beyond this. A being brought to conversion is simply a being brought to repentance; it is the very beginning, the very threshold of realised spiritual life; it is at best only this. If you do not

get further, you are in great danger even of losing what you know you once had: you had great sorrow for sin, earnest turning from it unto GOD, a changed mind and purpose for the future not to live unto yourselves, but unto Him Who died for you—that was your conversion; a true conversion it was, no doubt. But if you have to *look back* to it, to realise what repentance and the struggle against sin is, as a fact in the past not in the present, then you are in a state of exceeding danger; and the more so, if unhappily, you do not know it, or do not think it. It is the most empty thing in the world for a man to say, as we sometimes hear it said, 'Oh, I was converted twenty years ago! Well do I remember when GOD converted my soul'. The one question of supreme importance, is not, Have you ever been converted? but, Are you converted *now?* Are you living the life of conversion?—daily repenting of whatever sin is committed, be it great or small, daily turning unto GOD as your one chief good? If you are, then the question, whether you ever *were* converted at some time past, is of small moment, you are converted now, that is enough—all you need be anxious about: but if you are not, then *twenty* conversions in the past will profit you

nothing, nay, will be your great condemnation. Sooner than be the man boasting a past conversion, a thousand times would I choose the part and portion of the poor woman who should die bewailing her impenitence and the hardness of her heart.

But I must now caution you against another great mistake. Conversion, true conversion, is not everything: it is *the way* to everything, the man who turns to GOD with a broken and contrite heart, GOD will deny in nothing; penitence moves the keys of the treasuries of Heaven. Every grace flows for him, every channel is open for him; he has only to apply, and set his vessel as GOD directs, and he receives at once, freely, abundantly, and without price, pardon and cleansing, and reconciliation and peace. These things are *not included* in Conversion: the two are totally disconnected; they proceed from wholly distinct sources. Conversion or Repentance is the action of man, moved thereto, and assisted therein, by the HOLY GHOST; pardon, and cleansing, and peace, are the act and work of GOD alone. GOD gives these, and He gives them to the penitent how and when He will; He appoints the means, He lays down the channels, and through them the waters of salvation flow. S. Paul, after his

conversion, received remission of sins, reconciliation to GOD, and adoption into His family, by Baptism. The Prodigal Son, already a son, and now a penitent, received pardon and reconciliation on making his humble confession. The Penitent Thief was no exception, his pardon came to him, not in his repentance or conversion, but in CHRIST'S spoken word of Absolution—"Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise"; in that word peace entered his soul. Mary was truly converted when she sat with much love and in many tears at the SAVIOUR'S feet: her pardon was not until the words were spoken, "Her sins which are many are forgiven her". Do not then, my dear brethren, *rest* in Repentance, in Conversion. Do not rest in any remembered change in the past, nor even in any conscious blessed change in the present: pardon is not *in that;* your tears and turning have no power to cleanse you: all is in CHRIST, and comes to you through CHRIST'S channels, those through which He communicates with your soul. He gives now the first remission of sins, as He did in Apostolic days, in the washing of Baptism. For sins after Baptism, He speaks now, as He did then, (though with another's mouth,) the word of Absolution, "Thy sins

which are many are forgiven thee"; and now, as then, the word is with power. And still He gives strength and nourishment by That which has ever been the life of His people — His own Body and Blood in the Holy Communion, "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me". Coming in faith, in penitence, in conversion of heart, we still must *touch* Him, in those which are His channels: and then, and not till then, the virtue which is in Him flows forth, and becomes ours, in us, a well of water springing up to everlasting life.

III.

SAVING FAITH.

INSTRUCTION.—That an act of Appropriation, of Reliance wholly on Christ's finished Work, 'believing that He does *now* save *me*', is not the Scripture Account of Saving Faith.

Faith has very much to do with our Salvation, and what has to do with *that* it is most important that we should rightly understand. I will therefore, by God's help, and looking to the Holy Spirit to give it entrance into your minds and hearts, bring before you the plain teaching of Holy Scripture respecting Faith. If you say of any man that you believe in him, you mean you believe he is the man people take him for, the account given of him is correct. Now this is faith, simple bare faith, 'faith alone', 'faith without works'. But this evidently does not satisfy the relations in which we stand

towards GOD: for GOD is a Being Who has rights over us: Who justly claims our love and service, promising in return to give us an eternal reward. If then we rightly believe in Him, we 'wait upon' Him, we look to Him 'as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress', willing, waiting, to receive any order, any grace, which comes from Him. This is the character of true faith; this is the attitude of the soul in true faith; never for one moment is it without love and obedience. Love and obedience, at least in will if not yet in actual deed, there must be, else is it the faith of the head only. Faith must be of the heart: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation". Now this, and nothing less or more than this, is FAITH—in all ages of the world, the faith of the Patriarchs, the faith of the Apostles, the faith of Christian men now: that without which no man ever did, or ever can, please GOD. There is no *speciality* in Christian faith: by that I mean that there is nothing in it to make it different from the faith of Abraham, or Moses, or David. What was faith in them, three thousand years ago, is faith in us; precisely the same gift and grace of GOD which bringeth salvation. There is no other faith

than theirs: they believed in GOD and obeyed Him. This is all we can do, all which GOD requires of us. Of course, as GOD goes on revealing Himself, man must go on believing, else he ceases to believe: and as GOD goes on making known His will, man must go on obeying, else he becomes disobedient: and as GOD goes on adding to His promises, we must go on embracing them, else we cease to trust. This is just what has been done: we accept in our embrace more than the Patriarchs did, but only because GOD has revealed more. This is the only difference between them and us, their faith and ours.

Before our Blessed LORD became Incarnate, the faith of GOD'S people was summed up in this, "*that GOD is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*". No men rose higher in faith — no men by their faith achieved more glorious triumphs, than those of that illustrious company whose names are written in the XIth chapter of the *Hebrews;* and that, we are expressly told, was *their* faith: the faith in which they "wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight." By this faith they obtained

a good report, and received this testimony, that they pleased GOD. Whatever GOD asked of them, that they did: whatever *promises* were seen by them afar off, of them they were persuaded, and embraced them, and died in faith; confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and that they sought "a better country, that is, an heavenly".

But when GOD clearly revealed His SON, when He took upon Him our flesh, being born of the Virgin Mary, then, immediately, the new Truth, with all its incentives to love and obedience, leaped up into the very fore-front of a true faith. Did they believe in GOD—that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him? Of course they believed that: but that no longer was the question. Now, for the first time, they might stedfastly believe that and yet fall short of their salvation. The question now was, Do you *still* believe—not only in the only true GOD, but in JESUS CHRIST Whom He hath sent? This was now the test of a true and saving faith.—*Do you believe in Him Who is born of the Virgin Mary;* that He is the CHRIST the SON of GOD? "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name

of the Only-begotten SON of GOD". This was the touchstone of all faith, the condition of all salvation, the sharp dividing line between life and death: "He that hath the SON hath life; and he that hath not the SON of GOD hath not life"; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life". Accordingly, to the Jews, JESUS said, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins": but also, He says, "He that believeth on the SON hath everlasting life". And, side by side, within the compass of a few lines, we have the faith of the Apostles and the unbelief of Judas, in contrast: of Judas it is said that he "believed not", and therefore, abode in death; of the Apostles we hear that glorious confession of a true faith which was unto life—"We believe and are sure that Thou art that CHRIST, the SON of the Living GOD". This was their faith—*believing that JESUS was the CHRIST:* the faith in which they lived, the faith in which they conquered, the faith in joy whereof they left all and went to the world's end, preaching and teaching, "We have found the MESSIAS, which is called CHRIST". "These things

are written that ye might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the SON of GOD, and that believing ye might have life through His Name".

I don't know whether anything strikes you, but this thing painfully strikes me—I fear there are thousands of preachers and teachers in our day who would deny that this was 'saving faith' at all! And yet, certainly, this is the faith, the only faith—believing that JESUS is the CHRIST—to which all these promises are given: the faith by which the Apostles were saved, and to which alone they sought to bring others for their salvation. Believing that JESUS is the CHRIST—this, if the teaching of the Evangelists is to be received; nay, if the sayings of CHRIST Himself are to be believed—is the true Christian faith by which we are saved. Believing in HIM, believing that He is the CHRIST, that He is the SON of GOD, that Him hath GOD the FATHER sent—these terms are used indifferently, sometimes one, sometimes another, but to all alike, and to all equally, the promise of salvation is given. Whichever in particular is expressed, all are included—faith in JESUS, SON of GOD and Son of Mary—nothing less and nothing more. If you say, 'The right faith is *saving*, and this faith—believing

that JESUS is the CHRIST—a man may have without being saved at all', I answer, I am not responsible for your difficulty: but this at all events will solve it—let this faith, whoever has it, *be perfected*, as this faith in the Apostles was "made perfect", "by works"; and then this faith will save him, and without it, none other will. But the fact remains as it was, that, according to the Gospels, no other faith is required of any one for salvation than theirs, "We believe and are sure that Thou art that CHRIST, the SON of the Living GOD".

It is some time before we get further than this, before anything more is by name included in 'faith'. We get through the *Gospels*, and through the *Acts*, and almost through S. Paul's first Epistle, that to the *Romans*, before we find it: but there, in the Xth chapter we read, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the LORD JESUS, and shalt believe in thine heart that GOD hath *raised Him from the dead*, thou shalt be saved". Here, faith remains just what it was, but it covers more ground. It holds fast the truth it confessed in the beginning, "We believe and are sure that Thou art that CHRIST, the SON of the Living GOD"; it embraces also the truth of His Resurrection. It takes hold of, with a hearty

grasp, one of the foundations "of the doctrine of CHRIST": "If CHRIST be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; ye are yet in your sins". From that place we go on nearly to the end of S. Paul's 1st Epistle to the *Corinthians*, that is, to the XVth chapter, and there we find a summary of the Gospel to be believed, "by which also", says the Apostle, "ye are saved", "unless ye have believed in vain":—"I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that CHRIST *died* for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He *was buried*, and that He *rose again the third day* . . . and *was seen*" of many. CHRIST'S Death, Burial, and Resurrection, and Showing-again to His disciples, are here taken to fill up the measure of that faith which is to be believed for salvation. At each step does faith advance, at each advance does faith remain the same — receiving all which it pleases GOD to reveal of His SON, all which it pleases His SON to do. And then, taking a long stride, we come to S. John's 1st *Epistle*, and there we find a fresh statement as to what it is necessary that our faith should include, to be the faith of the Gospel, the faith by which we are saved. Holding-on to all which up to that

time had been taught, S. John is driven by stress of heresy to formulate that which stands in the very beginning of the Gospel — *I believe that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh.* Not, now, that JESUS CHRIST is the SON of GOD, but that the SON of GOD became true man: "Every spirit that confesseth that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh is of GOD; and every spirit that confesseth not that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh is not of GOD". And he ends all at the point where all begins, "We have seen and do testify that the FATHER sent the SON to be the SAVIOUR of the world. Whosoever shall confess that JESUS is the SON of GOD, GOD dwelleth in him, and he in GOD". To this, Holy Scripture has nothing more to add; its witness of faith for salvation is here complete.

Throughout the whole Bible, faith is of one kind, and grows and increases in one way, that is, *believing all* which GOD has so far revealed or brought to pass: it waits on His Word and Operation, and embraces all which GOD brings within its power of grasp. Its one great article under the Old Dispensation was belief in GOD the FATHER: "Abraham believed in GOD, and it was counted unto him for righteousness". In due time GOD revealed His SON,

and under the New Dispensation, as we find in the New Testament, its one leading article is belief in GOD the SON. "Ye believe in GOD, believe also in Me", and immediately faith answers, "LORD, I believe", "Thou art the CHRIST the SON of the Living GOD". And as CHRIST declares Himself, and reveals His purpose and His work, so does faith follow, embracing at every step whatever He says or brings to pass. His Death and Burial, His Resurrection and Ascension, each, as it becomes a fact, is seized and added to its store. At whatever step faith stopped in its onward course, there would faith die and cease to be. CHRIST cannot be divided: His Work cannot be divided. If we believe in GOD at all, we believe the record which He has given us of His SON: if we believe in the SON, we believe in His Person, Office, and whole Work for us men and our salvation. It is the unhallowed presumption of the popular teaching of the day to disjoint the several articles of the Christian Faith, and then to exalt one over another. It is commonly said, for instance, that 'Saving faith' is faith in the *Atonement*—in the Sacrifice which was offered up upon the Cross. I can only say this, and I appeal confidently to every one who will take the trouble

to read the New Testament carefully, all through, that such a statement is entirely unscriptural—that nowhere is the Atonement singled out for an especial faith, that no anxious inquirer is ever directed to make this act of faith, as the one specially required for his salvation. This, to such persons as make it "*Articulus stantis ecclesiæ*"—THE article of a standing church, must be very extraordinary, and even distressing: and the more so a great deal because to faith in some one particular article salvation sometimes *is* promised, as for example, believing that JESUS is the CHRIST, believing in His Divine Mission, believing in His Resurrection; but never, as it happens, to *this* one—believing in His Atoning Sacrifice; the one which is so generally and so specially singled out.[1] The truth is, and there is the whole of Scripture to bear the statement out, that FAITH *is always inclusive and not exclusive*—that believing in CHRIST is believing in a whole CHRIST, believing in His Work

[1] This may not be taken as any disparagement of the central act of our Redemption. JESUS on the Cross is our only hope. But we see JESUS first: we reach the Atonement through Him, not Him through the Atonement. He is the whole, that is a part, and the part is covered by the whole.

is believing in His whole Work. Whichever article comes out into prominence, and is for the time the dividing line between a true and a false faith, life and death, it does but share with the rest the embrace which faith gives it. While confessing one, faith retains all; and by confessing *that* one, shows that it holds all truly.

'But, after all, Why can't you simply tell us to Believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as Paul and Silas did the Philippian Jailor—"Sirs, What must I do to be saved? and they said, Believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved"'? My dear, dear brethren, this is just what I have been doing! GOD forbid that I should set before you any other faith than this! This is the whole Faith and the whole Gospel—"*Believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved*". But, I fear, you may attach one meaning to these words and I another: you very likely explain them in one way while Holy Scripture explains them in another: you very likely say, that "Believing in JESUS" is believing Him to be *your* Saviour; or, believing that this moment He *does* save you; or, casting your naked soul on His Atonement, resting for salvation on His finished Work, relying wholly

on CHRIST'S merits, appropriating to yourself the Salvation merited by His Death—this you very likely say is *Saving Faith*, the faith of the Gospel, by which the soul passes from death unto life. I can only reply, in all humility, that the Gospel *never says so*—that, search where you will, there is not one example in the Bible of the explanation you give—that, there is not a single instance of an anxious inquirer receiving any such direction as these. No: according to Holy Scripture (and by that we are bound to go) Believing in the LORD JESUS CHRIST is believing in His Person, in HIM, in what He is, and what for our salvation He became—that He is the CHRIST, the SON of the Living GOD, that He was conceived by the HOLY GHOST, born of the Virgin Mary; was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day He rose again, He ascended into heaven. This is how the Apostles understood and explained 'believing in CHRIST'; this is the faith to which they promised salvation, nay, to which salvation was promised by the SAVIOUR Himself. 'But—Impossible! How can this faith alone save us?' Nay, my friend, *that* is your difficulty, not mine. I never said that faith alone will save us. Holy Scripture never says so. And, unless faith

brings to the SAVIOUR our love and obedience, it is certain, quite certain, that it will not. This is what I said, and whatever you may think at present, I am sure you will not prove it wrong, that according to Scripture, believing in CHRIST is believing in Him just as we are taught to do in the *Apostles' Creed.* That is true Christian faith, according to the Apostles, "by which also", says one of them, "ye are saved, unless ye have believed in vain."[1]

How then does faith *save* us? And what is believing in vain? Faith saves us because it sets before us an open door to all the blessings of the Gospel. As soon as ever we declare our faith in CHRIST we are Baptized into His Name; we become His, His life becomes ours; and grace, pardon, every gift and every increase is to them that have faith. Now go back to the Philippian Jailor: you thought you had done with him—that in asking one question, you had settled all. I have not done with him: go back: mark the order of events—1. faith, 2. baptism, 3. rejoicing. First comes his inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" and the Apostles' answer, "Believe on the Lord JESUS

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 1–5.

CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved". In the *next* verse, "they spake unto him the word of the LORD", *i. e.*, preached unto him CHRIST, in Whom he should believe: *next* verse, he "was baptized, he and all his, straightway": *next* verse, he "rejoiced, believing in GOD with all his house". To us, how perfectly natural! It is what we entirely enter into. Exactly what the Church, under like circumstances, would do at this day. But how hard for others to account for! His faith they account not as his baptismal confession, but as that which made his salvation already *complete*. I can say boldly, without fear of contradiction, that there is not a Denomination on earth, so accounting of his faith, that would do as the Apostles did — baptize him and all his, straightway, in the prison, in the dead of night! And then, and not before, "he rejoiced with all his house". Let me just mention, in striking confirmation of this, the case of the Ethiopian Eunuch: Philip "preached unto him JESUS", and the Eunuch said, "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered, I believe that JESUS CHRIST is the SON of GOD". And Philip baptized him, and was caught away by

the SPIRIT; "and he went on his way rejoicing". They *believed*, both the Jailor and the Eunuch, that JESUS is the SON of GOD; they were *baptized*, straightway; both then went on their way *rejoicing*. Their faith had saved them. Our faith, then, saves us, when it brings us to the SAVIOUR in love and obedience—when it brings us with haste to His blessed Ordinances—when it leaves us at the SAVIOUR'S feet, saying, "LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Now for the other question we asked: What is believing *in vain?* Believing in vain is when our faith, however correct, is dead faith, *i. e.*, as S. James says, when it is alone, without works; when it is inoperative, when it does not bring to CHRIST either our love, or our obedience; when, for any good it is of to us, it were better if we had never believed at all.

Now the one question for the Apostles' days was, Do you believe that JESUS is the CHRIST? The one question for us in these days is, Have you believed in vain? It was hard for them to believe, hard too for them to believe in vain: but for us to believe, it is easy, easy too for us to believe in vain. Believing in JESUS that He was the CHRIST,

they passed from death unto life. To believe in Him was to join themselves to Him; to love, obey, and adore Him. Believing in Him, all else was assured. His grace, through whatever channels, flowed into their souls; faith wrought by their love, and by works was faith made perfect. Our peril of a barren faith was scarcely theirs. A peril indeed they had. Not all could see the GOD under the human form; the SAVIOUR, in captivity and mortal weakness: one here and there only; but when once this great grace of a true faith was given, they had all else. To see and know Him was to love Him, and to love was to obey.

The especial peril, the exceeding danger of our own days, is, lest we should have faith without love, without obedience, without works. We all of us have faith: we *do* believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the SON of the Living GOD, that He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. That is a true faith indeed! all that the Apostles taught, or required for salvation. It was their own. It saved them. It saved the Jailor and the Eunuch. It is ours. In this faith we have been baptized. But, brethren, how few of us it has saved! The promise is not broken. GOD'S Word standeth sure. It will

save, if to faith be added love and obedience: if, instead of being "faith alone", it be "faith by works made perfect". May GOD give us repentance—that sound mind, and grace to "do always those things that please Him".

To sum up, let me give you the three marks of a true and saving faith: 1. It *believes* all—whatever GOD has revealed. 2. It *receives* all—whatever GOD has provided. 3. It *does* all—whatever GOD has commanded. Never is it faith *alone*—that is wholly without value in His sight.

IV.

THE OFFICE OF FAITH.

INSTRUCTION.—That without an External Act of communication Faith can receive no Gift from above.

The subject we have now to consider is a most important one, and I must beg for it a very careful attention—the Office of Faith; true faith I mean. Faith which is 'without works', faith without love, without trust, I have nothing to do with at all; a barren faith, or a faith of the head only, is quite out of the way. But I bring forward true faith, the faith of the Gospel, which, as I have shown, is faith in our Blessed Lord, as for our salvation the Father hath revealed Him, and in which some degree of love and trust is a necessary element. And, touching this faith I am going to ask some questions, and in the

light of GOD'S Word help you to answer them. What does this Faith do for us? How far can it help us? In a word, What is its *Office?* In a word I answer—it brings us to CHRIST. That is a true answer, and a complete answer. It simply brings us to CHRIST, and there keeps us supplicating His grace until He hear and have mercy upon us. This is what it does, and all it does. Now if this is the Office of Faith, (and I cannot understand how any one who reads the New Testament carefully can dispute it,) there is one thing, in this our day, especially to be noted: not, now, how necessary a grace faith is: that we all allow; faith is the first thing necessary, and most of all things necessary. But the one thing especially to be noticed is, that it has no power to give the blessing which it brings us to receive; our believing does not make the blessing ours; although our faith be ever so perfect, and although it continue for ever so long at its highest exercise, we remain all the time as destitute of the blessing we seek, as we were the moment we first believed. It is the uplifted eye, the spoken or unspoken cry of the sinner to the SAVIOUR; it is not the channel of communication from the SAVIOUR to the sinner: it goes from us,

but it returns not again: it rises to Heaven, but it never descends bearing on its wings the blessing we ask: it brings us to the SAVIOUR'S feet and interests Him in us, but there its office ends, it has no power to bear the blessing back; we receive nothing by faith.

Of course, I am perfectly aware that this would be vehemently disputed. Many men, and good men, would take this as a denial of all that they have been taught, of all which they most surely believe. They do believe, and as confidently teach others, that they *receive* by faith, that faith *puts them in possession* of the thing they believe for. Then to these I say, 'Search the Scriptures, (most confidently do I make this appeal,) search them through and through, and you shall not find a single word, or one solitary example therein, but it shall bear out the truth of what I say'. Take the Examples of Holy Scripture first: for these speak most plainly, most unerringly: they are the Word of GOD made visible; His promises interpreted by His fulfilment of them. If we have these in sufficient number and variety, they will give us certainty, and make doubt impossible. And here, I cannot but say again, 'Search the Scriptures; examine them as you like,

Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, and you will not find one who received the blessing he sought, by faith, the instant he believed—you will not find one who received it in answer to his faith, without some other recorded act as the *channel* of it. Faith never put one in possession of what he sought: the blessing always came in some visible or outward act. There is no exception, no, not so much as one'. Out of Galilee, out of Judæa, out of the far-off Syro-Phenician coast, faith brought many to our Blessed LORD: they *came* in faith, but never in their coming did faith put them in possession of the blessing they were in quest of; they *waited* in faith—beholding the LAMB of GOD, but never while they waited did they find the blessing steal silently into their bosom; they *pleaded* in faith, but never while they pleaded, without an act of communication, was their cry for deliverance turned into a thankful song of praise. Out of the crowd, which daily surrounded Him, there never came one, to acknowledge a blessing given to an act of bare faith, 'LORD, as soon as I believed in Thy Name I received the mercy I sought'. To the Apostles, in all their ceaseless journeyings, there never came one, confessing that he had become a partaker of CHRIST by an act of faith alone.

These facts, and I invite you to test them for yourselves, are extremely significant: especially so should they be to those, who profess to find for their guidance all that they require in Holy Scripture. They never *do* find an instance of one who received by an act of faith alone.

It is not, as it would be, if no examples were given of how CHRIST fulfilled His promises, one way or other. Examples are given, hundreds of them; in the Gospels they cluster in every page, and are of every kind, yet all show one and the same thing —that faith never sufficed to put any one in possession of the blessing he was in quest of. The blessing, in every instance, came through some outward and visible act, or audibly spoken word, as the medium, or vehicle, or channel of communication. To some, it was by the word of His Mouth that the blessing came: "He cast out the spirits with *His word*"; "O woman, great is thy faith: *be it unto thee* even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour"; "Woman, *thou art loosed* from thine infirmity"; "Man, *thy sins are forgiven* thee"; "And He said unto her, *Thy sins are forgiven*": "He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast". To some, it was by

His Word and His Touch conjointly: "JESUS put forth His hand and *touched* him; saying, I will, *be thou clean*"; "Then *touched* He their eyes, saying, according to your faith *be it* unto you, and their eyes were opened". To some, by His Touch alone: "All they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him; and He *laid His hands on* every one of them, and healed them"; "And they brought unto Him young children, that He would touch them; . . . and He took them up in His arms, *put His hands upon* them, and blessed them". To some, it was by their touch of Him: "A woman having an issue of blood . . . came behind Him, and *touched* the border of His garment, and immediately the fountain of blood was dried up. And JESUS said, Somebody *hath touched* Me, for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me"; "And they brought unto Him all that were diseased . . . and besought Him that they might *touch* if it were but the border of His garment; and as many as *touched* Him were made perfectly whole". While to others, it was in the application, in addition, of some earthly element, consecrated to so heavenly a use, such as spittle and clay, and the waters of Siloam, that the SAVIOUR'S healing virtue flowed. All maladies

whatever, whether of soul or body, yielded to that which dwelt in our Blessed LORD'S Body without measure, and which He made to flow out upon them that were diseased by some actual manifestation of His will. Doubtless it was to their prayer —to which He gave a willing ear; doubtless it was to their faith—which moved the hand of Him Who made the worlds, that their salvation was owing: "Thy faith hath saved thee"; "for this saying go thy way"; "he that asketh receiveth": but to neither prayer nor faith, nor any thing else in man, was it given to set it flowing; this waited for a motion from Him; power of appropriation in the petitioner there was none, faith could help itself to nothing. The blessing, whatever it was, waited in His hand, until an act, a touch, a word, on His part passed it on from Him to them. In *addition* to faith, and *external* to man, there was required always, some medium, some vehicle, or channel of communication, by which the virtue which was in CHRIST flowed out upon them who in faith waited to receive it. Here it is that the popular teaching of the day is so painfully at variance with the teaching of the Gospel. Misdirected at this point, men cry out in an injured tone, 'No Sacraments, no ex-

ternal means, nothing but my faith between me and CHRIST!' and lo! CHRIST answers this impatient cry by giving to none but by an outward channel. The SAVIOUR never gave His blessing, silently, secretly, to be embraced by faith in the heart; but always in a way, which men, if present, could hear or see and take cognisance of. None ever said, 'Blessed be Thou, for Thou hast healed me—believing on Thee, my sins were forgiven me'; but we always read of the outward act, or word of CHRIST, first, then of the blessing received thereby.

Another thing, and most carefully to be noted, as it is strikingly in confirmation of what we say: Not only do we not receive CHRIST'S blessing into our hearts by faith, but the two—faith on our part and the blessing on His—do not even *synchronise*, they do not concur in time. There are instances many, in which faith precedes the blessing; and there are instances in which the blessing precedes faith.[1] Just as we have the repentance, we may have the faith, long before we have the blessing. As CHRIST gives in His own way, so also He gives in His own time. As faith has not power to lay

[1] S. John, ix. 7, 36, is an example.

hold of and possess itself of the blessing, so also it has not power to move the hand which holds the blessing, faster or slower. Its only office is to wait, patiently wait, until He hear and have mercy. There *is* a moment at which the blessing always comes ; but it is not the moment of faith : it is the moment in which CHRIST extends His hand, or speaks the absolving word. We never read, 'as soon as he believed', we do read, "as soon as He had spoken"; we read "at the same hour", "in the self-same hour", "that very hour", "immediately", "straightway"; but these expressions, often as they occur in the Gospels, never have reference to the faith of the individual, but always to the word or act which CHRIST makes the channel of His blessing.

2

I might well be willing that the matter should rest here. Nothing more can be needed to establish how alone it is GOD'S grace becomes ours. But I am more willing to go on ; for I hope yet, if you have any difficulties that I shall meet with them. There must surely be some reason, why many men have never yet received a truth which everywhere lies on the very surface of the Gospel. The very fact

that the popular teachers of the day are, to this hour, almost everywhere teaching the exact contrary, is likely to be a stumbling-block to you. You have questions, then, you would be glad to ask, and which, I for my part, shall be as glad to answer. And the way I shall answer them will be by bringing them to the light of GOD's Word. There, if the eye be single, difficulties will clear away as clouds do in the sunshine; and your faith shall stand, not on any word or judgment of man, but upon a solid, an immovable foundation.

To do this, we must start the inquiry on a new line, not, now, of GOD'S Acts of grace, but His Words of grace; not of His Operations, but of His Promises. And, going to Holy Scripture, we must be careful that we do not carry to it a meaning of our own. We must come in meekness, to hear what the LORD will say; "we must receive GOD'S promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us": only when we get at the sense which Scripture yields on comparing passage with passage—the harmony in which all stand—can it be said, "Blessed is he that believeth, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told him from the LORD."

There is a class of Scripture Promises very precious to every believing soul, and bearing directly on this important subject, which has the first claim of all to be considered; if only, because the passages are very much relied on as proving that very thing of faith, which, I have said, Scripture nowhere gives to it, that is, the power to *invest* us with the blessing we seek: "GOD so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten SON, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"; "He that believeth on the SON, hath everlasting life"; "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life"; "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die"; "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the SON, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life". What interpretation do we put upon these? We put on them no interpretation at all: we accept them just as they stand, in all their blessed truth, with the interpretation the SAVIOUR Himself gives them. He is their sure Interpreter: by His own acts He interprets His own words; *He interprets them by fulfilling them.* In whatever way He fulfilled them in the days of

His flesh, that is the way, most surely, in which He will fulfil them to us now. No other interpretation is possible. GOD forbid, that we should rush in with an interpretation which would divide CHRIST against Himself! Whether by word or act His teaching is one, always and entirely one. There cannot be the shadow of difference between the impressed meaning of the *examples* by which He speaks to our eyes, and the intended meaning of the *promises* by which He speaks to our ears. What are the promises but the operations foreshadowed; and what are the operations but the promises fulfilled? All that proceeds from Him is in perfect agreement and consistency, one part with another, and all with Himself, "The SAME, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever". But this question touches, not the consistency of His teaching only; it touches His faithfulness also, it touches Him as the soul's 'faithful and true Promiser': 'to make the word of promise to the ear, to break it to the hope'—is that a charge which might ever lie against Him! Whatever the word of promise is, that shall the fulfilment be also. He may make it more, but never can He make it less. To the men of His day the promises were given: to them they were fulfilled; *then in full*

measure they were fulfilled. If nowhere He fulfilled them by their act of believing, without the intervention of an outward channel, it was because nowhere had He promised to do so. Yet the very promises we have, they too had—"All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive"; "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"; "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him"; "If we ask anything according to His will . . . we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him". These are His promises; alike to them and to us: in whatever way He fulfilled them—whether with or without a channel of communication—that is the sense in which He gave them, and intended them to be taken.

We have to remember, then, that the question we are considering is an already *settled* one. We have the facts which decide it for us. All the promises have in very deed been fulfilled. We have the record of their fulfilment: and therein we see *how* and *in what manner* they were fulfilled. Those to whom they were fulfilled are our informants: and they are careful to show us how, in every instance, the promise (of whatever character it was) was ful-

filled to them, not in the act of believing, but in some act subsequent, and to them external—through some visible or otherwise outward channel.

And then there are all the great and glorious things that are spoken of Faith: and whatever they are, not one jot or tittle would I diminish from them. We read, how we are "saved through faith"; that we "live by faith"; that we have "joy and peace in believing"; that "believing, we have life through His Name"; that our faith "hath saved" us; that by it we are "made whole". Such declarations are plentiful enough; they are scattered up and down throughout the whole of the New Testament. What do they all mean? They are, of course, absolutely true, in the sense which our SAVIOUR intends them to receive. But what is that sense? Is it, that we are saved in the act of believing? Do they imply that sufficiency in faith which can dispense with the outward channels? Most certainly not! We have positive proof given us that they imply no such thing. The proof is this—the strongest and most emphatic of them are used in the New Testament of persons, to whom they were fulfilled, *not* by their act of faith, but by the external channel only. In our SAVIOUR'S mouth, (with all reverence we say

it,) the words mean just what they mean in ours: namely, that faith brings us to CHRIST with a suitable capacity for receiving His blessing; His word goes forth and immediately it is filled; and "believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable". Take one or two instances, the strongest we can anywhere find. To Mary Magdalene, JESUS said, "Thy faith hath saved thee; Go in peace". Was then her faith the channel? did faith convey the blessing to her? No, but that Blessed Voice, which, in words of Absolution, before[1] had spoken—"Thy sins are forgiven". Such instances I say are common enough: but they prove, not that faith puts us in possession of the blessing, but the very contrary. I will not go on arraying them: you may multiply them at pleasure with the help of a concordance at home. Take a case, however, from the ministry of the Apostles, that of the man, "a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked": Paul, "stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked". Happy for him that he had "faith to be healed";

[1] S. Luke, vii. 48, 50.

his faith 'saved' him: but the healing came not in his faith, but in the power of the word spoken. It is the case of S. Peter over again: "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee".

Faith 'in an honest and good heart', is a priceless treasure: it can compel Heaven, and the LORD of heaven, to bow to the humblest child of man: but one thing there is it cannot do, it cannot *convey* the SAVIOUR'S blessing. It is not a question of weak or strong faith. CHRIST never says, as many do, 'If your faith is strong enough': He says indeed to a struggling supplicant, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth". But no degree of faith—not the highest any more than the lowest—not that of the Centurion, of which CHRIST said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel"; nor this, small "as a grain of mustard seed", could in any wise lay hold of and possess itself of the blessing. It could only plead and wait. To them both, the blessing came at length, but it came in the channel of CHRIST'S spoken word.

Then there is another passage which must be noticed. Our Blessed LORD says, "If ye have faith, and . . . if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou

removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive".[1] Or, as another Evangelist says, in the same connection, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them".[2] Though, indeed, these are words to men not as receivers of grace, but as ministers of grace received: He gives to *them* like power to speak the word, and "it shall be done". Yet even so it is not faith, but the spoken word, which is the channel of the grace. A good example to the point is that of the man "lame from his mother's womb", "whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful". "He leaping up, stood, and entered with them into the temple". Whereupon Peter said, "His Name through faith in His Name hath made this man strong: . . . Yea, the *faith* which is by Him *hath given* him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all". But in what channel had the grace flowed? In that of the Apostle's *word*—"Such as I have give I thee: In the Name of JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth rise up and walk". "And immediately",

[1] S. Matt. xxi. 21, 22. [2] S. Mark, xi. 24.

we read, "his feet and ankle bones received strength". But the question before us, is not how His ministers should dispense what they have received, but how a needy petitioner should receive the grace held in store for him. And for this question there is from GOD'S Word only one answer. Independently of the means which He in His wisdom is pleased to appoint, there is no promise given; nor does He by any one example, amongst all those which He gives us for our instruction, show us faith alone crowning itself with the blessing.

Now it may have occurred to you to think that there *is* an example, and perhaps two, in which the blessing was received by an act of faith only, without any outward channel. Let us see what they are. First, there is the case of the Publican, who with the Pharisee went up to the temple to pray; and who, we read, "went down to his house justified rather than the other". Supposing, that here was the communication of a gift—in his case Scripture is not more silent as to the channel than as to his faith. It is quite true that no mention is made of either. But the real answer is this, it is, as our LORD tells us expressly, "a parable", not any thing more, and moreover, a parable spoken to this end

only—to show us not *how* His blessings are imparted, but *unto whom* He will impart them, "even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit"—to the self-abasing and sinful Publican, rather than to the self-righteous Pharisee. So much for that. And then the case of the Ten Lepers. In an act of obedience ten were cleansed. "Go, show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed". You say that this is an instance of receiving CHRIST'S blessing without the outward means. It is an instance, I freely grant, (where mind and will were already in obedient motion,) of CHRIST'S love outrunning the act, and blessing it ere it could be completed. But in this I see a striking illustration of the truth, that only in the way of CHRIST'S ordinances is the blessing ever found; that never is it found in an act of faith alone. And the end proves this more than the beginning. What are the plain facts? In an act of obedience the ten were cleansed. The power of CHRIST went forth on them in the way of grace. No mention is made of faith; save in the case of one; and to him its blessing came, not in his faith, nor until he received the word of blessing, "Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole".

And if this breaks down, this is all. There is not another instance, which even *seems* at the first glance to lend support to the favourite notion of our receiving grace apart from the channels of grace. I say this confidently: the result of a most patient and prayerful examination of GOD'S Word; of the New Testament more than once, twice, or thrice, verse by verse, all through. There is not an instance anywhere to be found therein of any one, receiving any grace, blessing, or gift, by an act of faith alone.

My brethren, I fear it is for some a hard lesson; and I think I can almost hear the impatient thought, 'Just as if CHRIST could not give without means!' And I say, 'Of course He could; and so also CHRIST could give without faith'. But the significant fact —shown to a careful search of Holy Scripture— is this: that many blessings were given, both to soul and body—the higher and the lower—where no mention is made of faith; but of the *means* whereby the blessing is given, (unless the case of the Ten Lepers be made an exception,) there is mention in every instance. That grace and the channels of grace should so always go together is not surprising; when we duly consider that both are CHRIST'S,

and one for the other: but that they should always be *shown* together—in no instance the grace without the proper channel of it—is very remarkable. I can only understand this in one way—as a very solemn warning, given us by our Blessed LORD Himself, against the persuading of ourselves that His purposes of grace will be fulfilled to us apart from the channels of grace; in a way, in which He never allows us to see them fulfilled to any other, and for which there exists not a vestige of Scripture authority.[1]

[1] While no objection against this will be brought from Holy Scripture, a pretty confident one will be brought from *experience:* 'I *know* what the LORD has done for my soul! . . . in the day when I believed on Him'. Most real these experiences often are, quite independently of Sacraments, and even before Baptism. But this does not cover the same ground. There may be great blessings of the SPIRIT'S *working within*, where there are no communicated gifts: Nay, more, there *must* be, or we cannot receive the gifts. First in time, and as a *preparation* for the other, come a spirit of prayer, faith, conviction of sin, contrition, conversion; and these answer exactly to the 'experiences' spoken of, and which are supposed to disprove the teaching that only through the channels of GOD'S appointment do we receive His gifts of grace. They do no such thing. They are the experiences of many we read

of in the New Testament — conversion in S. Paul, contrition in the Magdalen, faith in the Eunuch, who as yet waited for the Gift. They are quite a different *order* of gift: They are 'given' only in the sense of being Divinely originated in us. Apart from ourselves they have no existence; and therefore could not be communicated to us from without by channels.

And there is 'joy' in these experiences: the joy of the word received (S. Matt. xiii. 20); the joy of a man who "goeth and selleth all that he hath" (S. Matt. xiii. 44); the joy of self-surrender (S. Luke, xix. 6), but *not* the joy of *possession*. There is joy in repentance: repentance is in two stages, remorse and fear, contrition and love; the first without joy, the latter with joy most real, while forgiveness is waited for. Mary knew a 'joy' passing the understanding of any (save ONE) of those who reclined at Simon's feast: but her joy might not do duty for His blessing. Her pardon was not yet: the Absolving word spoken sealed her peace.

V.

CHANNELS OF GRACE.

INSTRUCTION.— That the Channels of Grace God has provided correspond to spiritual needs, and meet the exact wants of our nature.

If I know anything of the spiritual cravings of men in the hour of their deepest need, I can, in well-known words, give voice and utterance to them— "*Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat!*" Three thousand years old and more, though these words are, they do yet express, and that exactly, the painfully felt want of multitudes in this year of our Lord. How many I have known — how many perchance you have known, and among them some of your dearest friends, who have for days and weeks, aye, perhaps even months, carried about within them a wounded spirit. The Holy Spirit of God has

convinced them of sin and of departure from GOD, and thenceforth all joy is broken : they refuse to be comforted ; they sorrow unto repentance, and not yet hath the countenance of the LORD shined upon them. They seek Him, they seek Him earnestly, but they do not find Him ; they pray — truly it might be said, "without ceasing" — but they obtain no answer ; they read books, they get directions from pious friends ; they run here, and there, but their distress finds no remedy ; they believe — truly they believe in GOD and in JESUS CHRIST Whom He hath sent — but they have not joy and peace in believing. Heavily, wearily, the days pass, this day as yesterday and as for weeks it has been : they labour, they wrestle, they pray, they plead the promises, they try acts of faith — 'I do believe, I do believe that JESUS died for *me*' — and yet, as thousands have known to their keenest, bitterest sorrow, the method has failed them over and over again : until, at length, the weary laden soul finds vent for its anguish in passionate outburst, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him ! that I might come even to His seat !" Oh, how they long *then*, in that hour, to turn from their own weary selves, away from their own agonizings, away from self and every thought

of self, just to come into His Presence alone, even to His Seat! How confidently do they believe, as in my very heart I do, that at once He would have pity on them, and instantly should His voice go forth, thrilling through every sense, "Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace."

I say, 'I have known this,' Aye, my dear brethren, I have suffered this: my own soul has been wrung with the torture — the want of a SAVIOUR Whom I could not find. I have known it in many to be going on, not for days only, but for weeks and months, and with some, with variations of intensity, even for years — for years before they could rejoice in a sin-pardoning GOD! And to many, alas, in the meantime, the distractions of the world, and the weariness of a barren struggle, have brought (as is always to be feared,) a gradual slackening and the passing away of their first impressions, and finally, the loss of all. My brethren, for the love of JESUS and for His dear sake, let me direct your attention to His blessed Gospel. JESUS "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil". Do you ever find a case of long and weary waiting *there?* Do you ever find a case of disappointment? Is there ever, such a thing

as 'hope deferred'?—which truly and indeed 'makes the heart sick.' Was it ever a question of 'weak or strong faith'? Was it ever 'the race to the swift, and the battle to the strong', in regard to the SAVIOUR'S blessing? And then, think again, beloved brethren, have you not *all* that ever they had who received from Him, in 'full measure, pressed down, and running over'? You have the *repentance* of Peter: bitterly do you weep, as you see His love and remember your own sin; the repentance of the Magdalene, the woman who was a sinner: Would there be any greater joy to you now, than to bow yourselves at the SAVIOUR'S feet, to wash them with your tears, to anoint them with sweet ointment though it cost you all you had? You have also *faith,* the faith even of the Apostles: you do believe 'that JESUS is the CHRIST,' the SON of The BLESSED. You have the faith, too, of the Leper, which "moved the compassion" of JESUS, "LORD, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean". And it is no hard thing for you to add, 'LORD, and Thou *wilt*'. Your faith has long included the SAVIOUR'S willingness to save. In nothing is your faith wanting of what our Blessed LORD at any time required. And is not He the same now as He was

then? And are not you as dear to Him as any poor sinner who came to Him in the days of His flesh? What then is needed more? Oh, just this, you want the CHANNEL of the blessing — you want *His touch*, you want to hear *His word spoken*, you want to receive *His order* 'Do this and be whole'. This they had, and on their repentance and faith, it was always given; and with it, and in it, the blessing always came, turning their prayer into praise, their sorrow into joy unspeakable. Are we, then, in an evil case? Have we lost what they had? Has CHRIST ascended up on high and left no channels of grace behind? O, blessed be GOD, No: all that they had, we too, have, and more. All that they had, we have specially appointed to this very end, and His promise joined to it that it cannot fail. We have His touch — contact with His blessed life-giving Flesh; we have His word spoken — "Thy sins are forgiven"; we have His order of grace — "Wash and be clean". We *do* 'know where we may find Him': we *can* 'come even to His seat'. Not one of the good things, by which He conveyed blessings to them in the days of His flesh, has He failed to hand down to us. By His provision *all* are ours: as efficacious, now, as ever they were in

the days of His walking in and out amongst men. His means, His ordinances, His channels, were full of life and blessing then, and full of blessing they are now. Never were they withdrawn. Never have they run dry. One thing only do they want, to be unto us, all that at any time they were — they want our *faith* and our *instant embrace.* Because they are CHRIST'S, we want to receive them as CHRIST'S. If, like Naaman, we turn wrathfully away — 'What good can *that* do us?' or, if we accept them only as 'mere forms'; if we do not *expect* to find CHRIST in them, if we look upon them as being empty — then, of course, we shall *find* them empty. Not so did those of old, and them hath CHRIST set forth as examples to us: "If I may but touch the hem of His garment I shall be whole"; "Lay Thy hand upon her and she shall live"; "LORD, I am not worthy, speak the word only"; "I went and washed, and came seeing". To them, whilst the SAVIOUR was visibly present upon earth, the channels were always charged with blessing; none ever received without them; none ever expected to receive without them. All waited in earnest longing for an order, a word, a touch, from CHRIST. The idea had never yet occurred

to any man that he could put himself in possession, simply by the action of his own faith. Faith came empty and begged the blessing, the channel was always full and brought it. 'But'—'but'! Ah, where is it that doubt will not find its way in?—'was it to continue so?' Perhaps we think, not: perhaps we think that the instant CHRIST went up from the midst of His disciples, (His hands outstretched in blessing as His last act,) and a cloud received Him out of their sight, from that instant *all was changed;* the old order gave way to the new; and henceforth man received, no longer through the outward or visible channels, as used and appointed by CHRIST, but in the act of believing, through his own act of faith alone. Blessed be GOD, we need not *doubt!* Whichever it was, we may know. For this we have only to examine what has been written. Then, dear brethren, I say, Search the Scriptures: from the point of our LORD'S Ascension to the last written word of the last living Apostle, search them most carefully, and you shall not find one single instance in which CHRIST'S blessing of pardon, remission of sins, healing for soul or body, was communicated to man by his own act of faith. But while faith received no

new power—not the power of encircling and drawing down the blessing by its own force of attraction, the Sacraments or channels of His grace continued in all their *old* force—the power of handing over from CHRIST, for faith to receive, whatever it was that prayer asked to have. Himself the Channel in that part of His Person which was *Man*, CHRIST continued after His death as before, to make man the channel of His grace to man: by man's speech and touch, and in earthly forms, whatever He chose, He extended Himself to us. Then and now, as from the beginning it was, the channels are *His*. Nowhere do they run dry, at no time were they withdrawn, in no wise were they to cease with the first twelve of the Apostles. They were given for a permanency, both the Ministers and the Gifts by them and the Channels in which they flowed—"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of CHRIST: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the SON of GOD, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST". Here the soul's craving is met, and abundantly is it satisfied. Here (Praise the BLESSED ONE) we *do 'find Him'*; we *come*

'*even to His seat*'. We touch Him; we receive His touch. Here the Sinner and the SAVIOUR meet together—the sweet and the bitter fountains; out of one goes sin, out of the Other streams forth grace and blessing.

Oh, little do we realise our exceeding blessedness, if we covet to be in the place of those who saw His Face in the flesh. Whatever blessing they had, we have, only made manifold more; in whatever channels He gave to them, in the same does He give to us, only now in richer, truer grace. To them came blessings through His word spoken, through His touch received or the laying on of hands, through the washing with water, through the anointing with oil, through the ministry of those whom He sent: and these all, whatever they were, were settled permanently upon His Church. One by one He took them up, and filled them with a fuller grace and then made them over to us, not for a time but for all time. To speak of their being 'not fulfilled to us now' as *then* they were, is to overlook the fulfilment of them a hundred-fold, now in this life and in the world to come. Only look at them, one by one, and see, whether you ask wisely, "What is the cause that the former days

were better than these?" He then said, "Wash and be clean", but that was of the flesh: to us His word of equal power is, "Arise, and wash away thy sins"; "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved". He then wrought one transient miracle to feed five thousand men with the bread 'which perisheth': His working now is that of a standing miracle; from every Altar dispensing to all the Bread 'which endureth unto everlasting life'. He then "laid His Hands upon a few sick folk and healed them": and now by the Laying on of hands for strength and might, to all the HOLY GHOST is given. He then spake the word of Absolution, but, except in a very few cases, it was of the body, freeing it from its sicknesses: now by His priests His Absolution is everywhere spoken, and it is of the soul, freeing it from its sins. Then He graced one earthly marriage with His presence: now He is present in grace at every marriage where His blessing is sought. Then by the anointing with oil many that were sick were healed: the next time Unction is mentioned it brings to both soul and body a spiritual value, and is directed for all.[1] His first sending forth Ministers

[1] S. James, v. 14.

was with gifts, which, for grace and blessing, could bear no comparison with what He finally gave, just before His Ascent into Heaven: that, too, was for a season, but this for continuance, "even unto the end of the world." As compared with them, in nothing do we come short; in all things and in whatever is given, we do exceed in blessing. The stream becomes wider, and the channels deeper, as the SAVIOUR'S 'living waters' flow on. At every change, at every advance, something more is *added*, something greater is *given*, until, looking back to the beginning — when JESUS first began to give gifts unto men, we stand reminded that it never was His order to give the best first, then that which is worse; and we say, in deeper, truer tones, "LORD, Thou hast kept the good wine until now".

If we do not *receive* the increase — if we have not in ourselves, all the gifts which we hear of by the hearing of the ear — Why is it, but only 'because of our *unbelief!*' And, true indeed! Where in the world is it, that we find such sad instances of unbelief, and the spirit of rebellion and murmuring which 'worketh in the children of disobedience'? 1. Some reject the Ministry — either dispensing with an external ministry altogether, or, in place of that

which comes by CHRIST'S appointment, devising and constituting one of their own, which, coming to themselves from themselves, who can wonder that it comes empty — bringing them nothing more than that they already have? 2. Some reject *Holy* Matrimony: lay ministration, or a civil contract, giving them all that they require. 3. Some reject the Anointing "with Oil in the Name of the LORD:" 'tis neither the outward channel nor the inward grace that they care to receive, or even to inquire about; plainly as it is commanded, they dismiss it with contemptuous indifference. 4. Some reject Confirmation or the Laying on of hands for the gift of the HOLY GHOST: so content with the promise, that they care nothing for the Divine mode of fulfilment. 5. Some reject Absolution, as offered by CHRIST by the ministry of His servants, "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them." 6 & 7. And some, again, reject both Baptism and the Eucharist.[1] And, as some think they can do without *this* or *that* particular

[1] 'But are there not *other means* of grace?' Yes, undoubtedly; but not other *channels* of grace. The PREACHING OF THE WORD, personal sickness, a crushing bereavement, a

one, and fulfil to themselves its grace by their own act of faith, so do others — more consistent — think they can do without *any;* and sweep them all aside as obstacles and worn-out superstitions. And what wonder, when spiritual hunger is awakened, and not knowing wherewith to appease it, that men try even the barren method of *exciting their own emotions!* Poor souls, as if exciting their hunger *could* be the way to the satisfying of that hunger! What wonder, looking round for help, that they fall a *ready prey* to

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shocking death, the waning of earthly hopes — these come, as many know, with mighty power to work a blessing. Even a chance word may be made "the arrow of the LORD'S deliverance", or a reproof which GOD strikes home. These, then, are means of grace, being means of spiritual awakening, of conversion, of desire for life more abundantly: as prayer, fasting, almsgiving, are means to humility, charity, love of GOD, and other graces. But none of these are channels, conveying blessings from without; they originate within: they point upwards — GOD is their object; the channels point downwards — man is their object. In the one, grace is an internal influence; in the other, an external gift.

Conviction of sin, contrition, conversion, have their beginning and ending wholly *within* — being there inwrought by the SPIRIT. Remission of sin, the grace of Baptism, of Confirmation, of the Holy Eucharist, of Orders, of Matrimony, of

those who are ever coming with some new thing, "Lo here, or lo there!" And after all their weary wanderings, and unsatisfied cravings, What wonder is it that their whole soul breaks out in a most true, most plaintive lament, almost too deep for words, "*Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His Seat.*"

Oh, brethren, we have been terribly losing sight of our great blessedness: we have been 'verily guilty,' in passing over, and even despising, the channels which CHRIST has given to connect us

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Unction (S. James, v. 14), are given to us from *without*, are perfect gifts from above.

This broad and undeniable distinction marks off those ordinances which GOD has appointed as *channels* for the conveyance of His grace to man from those other *means*, whether human or Divine, occasional or regular, by which the soul is moved to correspondence with the strivings of the SPIRIT—by which the soil is prepared, and increase is given to the seed sown. And while the former have faith only, the latter have *feeling*—often powerfully excited—and thus is explained the paradox that some (feel they) '*get more good*' in a means of grace of human appointment, *e. g.* a Class-meeting, than in one of GOD'S ordaining, *e. g.* the Holy Communion! By one *you* are 'moved' toward grace, by the other grace is moved toward you. Sadly enough, the two are commonly set in antagonism! Who might not see, that for *fulness* of blessing, either one depends on its conjunction with the other?

with Himself: Sacraments of His own choosing, of His own ordering, of His own filling with grace! And this we have done, some of us, (GOD forgive us,) persuading ourselves that thereby we were honouring Him *the more!* As if the wish to honour CHRIST could anyhow be better shown than in meekly and gratefully accepting whatever thing, and in whatever way, He has appointed for us. As if our faith could be better shown than by our coming, without question, without doubtfulness, without scruple, to receive His blessing by whatever channel it pleases Him to offer it. If men — living in this day, and 'professing themselves wise' — are to be taken at their own word, How many there are who would have rebuked the poor woman's craving to touch the hem of His garment, and have shown her 'a more excellent way'! How many there are who would have stopped those who poured into the streets, carrying with them couches and beds with sick lying thereon, "that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them"! 'A strange instance of superstition', they would have said it was. And what hard names — fetishism, relic-worship, and such like — they would have found for the action of those, who bore to their

friends from the body of S. Paul, "aprons and handkerchiefs", that their diseases might be cured, and that evil spirits might pass out of them! But for the Apostles to countenance such credulity!!. . . . . Ah, "the LORD knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain": He honoured such faith greatly, and His Apostles who encouraged it, by granting the things to be done. If then His creatures, and even their very apparel, or the mere shadow of them passing by — all *unauthorised, unappointed*, as they were — were thus honoured to have His blessing pass through them, What may we not rightly expect to receive through those channels which were by CHRIST ordained for the *express purpose* of conveying His grace? For my part, I can conceive of no blessing too great for us to receive through an outward channel, even the meanest, spittle and clay, or whatever it is. I have only to know that it has been appointed by my LORD, and therein, I am sure, I shall find, whatever it pleases Him I should receive. With my whole heart I do believe that for those needs of the soul, which are the same now as they were in the days when He dwelt visibly among men, His grace still flows on, as most surely it will do to the end of the world, in the channels in which He

first ordained it. Never may I, His creature, take His grace out of His own channels, and lay it up in an imaginary reservoir, to be drawn on by my own act of faith alone. Never may I, His minister, because of my own sin and weakness, doubt that it still flows on to all penitent souls through the 'earthen vessels' which He has provided to conduct it. CHRIST'S Ordinance claims and receives my faith; I bow, I obey; and for the silencing of all doubts or gainsayings, I point simply to His word and once-established order of giving, and never by Him changed or withdrawn.

And surely He has set His own mark of blessing upon it. He has given a most appreciable blessing to those who do truly and in faith receive it. *Never, for these,* is there long and weary waiting: like those to whom His grace first came, they receive *at once,* "straightway", "immediately", the instant the channel is put in motion: the instant the water is troubled, or the absolving word is spoken, or the act commanded is performed, the blessing is theirs, their own; and they *know* it, they believe and rejoice: the channel is the "outward and visible sign" to them of the "inward and spiritual grace" "given and received"; it is "a pledge to assure them

thereof", it is their assurance; and being CHRIST'S, it can neither fail nor deceive.

This then is our great blessedness — A PRESENT SAVIOUR — *present in power to heal, in all His Channels of Grace:* in Holy Baptism for the soul's first cleansing; in the Laying on of hands for the promised Gift of the HOLY GHOST; in Holy Communion, where He is the soul's True Bread; and in Absolution where His sweet words, "Thy sins are forgiven", go forth on His erring children, often as they come confessing them, and as long as this world shall last. All our journey through, faith sees and hears what is not given for sense to discern — An ever-present SAVIOUR seated on His Throne of Grace, dispensing by His ministers on the right hand and on the left: and our eyes being open, and our souls filled in a wealthy land, we hear with pity the cry of the disconsolate, as it now and again breaks in upon us from without — "Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His Seat!" — and in knowledge of what the LORD has provided, not willing that any should perish, we long to say unto them, if only they would hear us, "*Come thou with us, and we will do thee good*".

VI.

FAITH ONLY.

INSTRUCTION.—That 'Faith Alone' for Salvation is a dangerous deceit, and does not stand an Appeal to Holy Scripture.

Not by faith only.—S. James. ii. 24.

Speaking in the fear of God, and yet "boldly as I ought to speak," there is one great and pestilent heresy which has taken hold of the minds of the people of this country, which forms the staple of all popular religious teaching, and which has here and there been received, as being in some especial manner *Evangelical*, amongst ourselves. I mean the doctrine of 'faith only', faith without works, and that as the instrument of our Justification.

We owe it to this, that we are thrown out of harmony with Christian teaching as it stands for us

in GOD'S own Word—that we hold our breath, and keep in silence our tongues, as we pass over texts which are felt to clash with a doctrine so favoured as to gain almost universal acceptance. We dare not tell an inquiring sinner, as the AUTHOR of our Salvation did, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments". To save their own credit, men have the audacity to say that our SAVIOUR was speaking *ironically*, and directed the Young Ruler to 'keep the commandments' because he could not keep them.[1] We dare not say with that LORD'S

[1] It is curious that it should not be perceived that such an interpretation would avail nothing, even if it should, in this instance, be allowed. The same *twist* would have to be given to *all* CHRIST'S teaching, to bring it into accordance with the favourite notion.—"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall *enter* into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will" (of My Father Which is in heaven); "Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine and *doeth* them", (he is like a man which built an house and laid the foundation on a rock); "Whosoever shall *do* and teach them", (the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven). This is 'the law' which 'shall not pass away'; (*S. Matt.* v. 18, 19.) and of which S. Paul speaks—"Not the hearers of the law are just before GOD, but the *doers* of the law shall be justified": (*Rom.* ii. 13) with S. James in unison—"Be ye *doers* of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves".

most loved disciple, without adding words of our own to evacuate it of its meaning, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life". We dare not say with S. James 'the LORD'S brother', "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and *not* by faith only"; because we feel that that would be to upset and bring to the ground that structure of ours that we *are* justified by faith only. These are instances, and if more were wanted, more could be given, of the want of correspondence there is between our teaching, and the teaching of the DIVINE MASTER and those who 'spake as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST'. Now the man who cannot speak as our LORD and His Apostles did, without adding words of his own to hinder the effect of theirs, has, to say the least of it, as a teacher, no claim upon us for acceptance. It is a fatal mistake, an incurable mistake which nothing can remedy. To the end of time, these and other like passages will stand point-blank against him: they cannot be put out; they may be explained away; but ever, now and again, they will reassert themselves and ask for acceptance. And while interpretations, strained and varying, are weakened by repetition and pass away, the words of

our GOD continue as they are, every jot and tittle of them, unchanged and unchangeable. A doctrine, a theological system, *popular* as it may be, based on select portions of Holy Scripture, and which exists only by setting text against text, or by silencing those with which it does not agree, stands self-convicted; the falsehood is apparent; it is too clear as a fact to be disputed. But there remains something to be allowed for: it does not therefore follow, because a doctrine thus built up is false, that the builder is false also. Men are, as to their minds, so constituted, that if they reject the Church's guidance and teaching, and instead thereof hammer out a system of their own, which frequently is called by their own name, they *cannot* include the whole of Scripture: some portions seem so true, and are in consequence so magnified out of proportion, that other parts will not fit in.

We come then to consider, What is the origin of that doctrine of 'faith only,' 'faith without works,' which has brought such leanness, such woeful barrenness, into the lives of those who yet can call themselves Christians.[1] I shall not treat the question histori-

[1] The mischief of it is *seen*, not in those 'few,' who, powerfully drawn by the love of GOD, do glorify Him in their lives;

cally: that would not be without its lessons and warnings; but that might be disputed, and so would determine nothing. I shall treat it Scripturally. I will consider those portions of Holy Scripture on which the doctrine is raised, and shall show that they do not support it, but are, as we should expect to find them, in perfect harmony with those other portions which bring it to the ground. I shall show, that although the teaching of S. James can never be made to harmonise with the teaching of those who tell us that we are justified by faith only, with the teaching of all other Apostles—and especially S. Paul—the harmony is perfect. 'But,' asks some one in surprise, 'does not S. Paul say, We conclude, therefore, that a man is justified by faith only, without the deeds of the law?' No: he does not. The only place in the Bible where 'faith only' is mentioned is in S. James's *Epistle*, and it is brought in there just *in order to deny* that a man is justified by faith only—"Ye see then, how that by works a man

but in the 'many,' who also receive the doctrine. With these it is the only part of their belief which has any practical influence upon them: neglect of all religious duties and observances is excused by it. At no time was Antinomianism so rife in English parishes as it is now. It is the *only profession which multitudes are ever heard to make.*

is justified, and not by faith only." What S. Paul says, is, "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." It is here, as in many similar passages, the Apostle's contention, that the man who embraces the *Gospel* stands in no need of being made perfect through the *Law*. Where it does not refer to the Mosaic Law in particular, but has a wider application, it means that a man must stand indebted solely to GOD for his Salvation, and not think to *merit* it by his own works: it is "not of works, lest any man should boast;" "it is of faith, that it might be by grace."

In these two senses—and in these two only—S. Paul says, we are "justified by faith:" 1. It is "by the Faith of JESUS CHRIST, and not by the works of the Law."[1] 2. It is "of faith, that it might be by grace."[2]

Let us take them both in order. Of the *first*, S. Paul says—"Stand fast in the liberty wherewith "CHRIST hath made us free, and be not entangled "again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul, "say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, CHRIST "shall profit you nothing. CHRIST is become of no "effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by "the Law; ye are fallen from grace. How turn ye

[1] Gal. ii. 16. [2] Rom. iv. 16.

"again to the weak and beggarly elements, where-
"unto ye desire again to be in bondage? Knowing
"that a man is not justified by the works of the Law,
"but by the faith of JESUS CHRIST. CHRIST is the
"end of the Law for righteousness to every one
"that believeth. Therefore, we conclude that a man
"is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law."
Now I ask this question—Is it not something *monstrous* that these passages, by which S. Paul would reserve to CHRIST His full glory, *should be turned against Him*, against His own sayings, His own ordinances, His own requirements of us? From first to last in these warnings against Judaism, there is not so much as a reference to what is commanded by CHRIST: and of course, S. Paul never could have entreated us to stand free from what CHRIST has laid upon us! *Yet these* passages are quoted, again and again, with the intention of showing that we are justified 'by faith alone,' without obedience, without sacraments, without keeping CHRIST'S commandments![1] The Apostle's meaning is however clearly

[1] A typical offender in this respect is the Rev. J. C. Ryle, the well-known tract writer. Some of his heroic paragraphs would be sadly shorn of strength, if these passages were not thus pressed into an alien service.

determined by himself: he goes on, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but *the keeping of the commandments of* GOD;" "In CHRIST JESUS neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith *which worketh by love*." And thus, to the Apostle, faith which worketh by love, and the keeping of GOD'S commandments in faith and love, are the same—of equivalent value. S. Paul knows no other faith than this, but he would as earnestly condemn it as does S. James: and S. James knows no other works than these, but he would denounce them as warmly as ever does S. Paul. In illustration of what he teaches, S. Paul mentions in particular Abraham: and in illustration of what he means, S. James mentions Abraham in particular, likewise. He, the father of the faithful, is just *the example* to which they both turn for the perfect exhibition of their meaning. In Abraham, the exact truth is shown. S. Paul, showing the Divine way of justification, says, "Abraham believed GOD, and it was counted unto him for righteousness:" and S. James, in showing the same, says, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" Now, when you turn back to the record of Abraham, in the Book of *Genesis*, you see exactly

how both Apostles agree: Abraham had both faith and works ; faith made perfect by works, and works made perfect by faith. Abraham received the promise of a son, "And he believed in the LORD, and He counted it to him for righteousness." Again, Abraham was told to offer his son for a burnt offering, and he obeyed and did as GOD had told him, and the *second time*[1] "the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed GOD, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." Here is shown, in a wonderful manner, the unity of faith and works. Both Apostles claim the fulfilment of this same Scripture in Abraham: S. Paul *tells* us of his faith in receiving the promise, S. James *shows* us his faith in offering Isaac. How beautiful the challenge which S. James thereupon makes for Abraham—"Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." "He staggered not through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to GOD." And, since they refer to this case of Abraham, this fixes the meaning of two other passages: "Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt."

[1] S. James, ii. 21–23.

Abraham's works are set down to his faith, are counted as faith,[1] and therefore in him is the reward reckoned of grace: "faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect." And then the next verse, "To him that worketh not, (in a Judaical manner, as did not Abraham,) but believeth, (as a Christian—his 'faith working by love,') his faith is counted for righteousness." If any one has the heart to mar the beautiful harmony of these passages, and to set two Apostles *in contradiction* to each other, he does, by his presumption, convict of error, only himself. Abraham's faith and Abraham's works were all one—the undissevered parts forming the whole. Reflecting thereon, S. James asks, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, (and no one has a greater claim to be considered *Evangelical* than he,) has welded the two together thus:—

> "Nor steel nor flint alone produces fire,
> Nor spark arises till they both conspire:

[1] S. James, ii. 21, 23.

Nor faith alone, nor works without, is right,
Salvation rises when they both unite."[1]

The man who has faith, and adds to his faith works and every endeavour to please Him, is the man alone whom GOD will justify.

'But does not the Scripture say "*Believe* on the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved"?' Indeed it does. But who *does* believe in Him without obeying His voice, and doing what He requires? If any one thinks he does, and calls this faith, *his faith* will not save him. Suppose that you were sick, and a physician should say, 'Have faith in me, and you shall be cured'; *Would* you be cured, without following his instructions and taking the medicines he gave you? Is this what the physician would mean? Assuredly not. Suppose you were ready to perish of hunger, and a friend were to say, 'Come to me,

[1] "We have received it as a maxim, that 'a man is to do nothing, in order to Justification': *nothing can be more false.* Whoever desires to find favour with GOD, should 'cease from evil, and learn to do well.' Whoever repents, should 'do works meet for repentance.' And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for? Is not this 'salvation by works'? Not by the *merit* of works, but by works as a *condition.*" (*Large Minutes.*) This is the legal standard of Methodist doctrine: but the actual teaching, at the present day, is strongly Antinomian, and, as a rule—practice *accordingly.*

and you shall be filled': *Would* you be filled, if you did not sit down when bidden and eat that provided for you? Would you *consider* yourself filled? Certainly not. And it is the same all through. Your coming would not fill you; you would eat, and by doing that you would be filled. Your having faith in the physician would not cure you; you would take what he gave you and act on his instructions, and by doing that you would be cured. And your faith in the Great Physician, this alone will not save you: you must take what He gives you, and do as He bids you; and in doing this you will be saved. It is not your faith that saves you: your faith brings you to CHRIST, and CHRIST saves you; and saves in His own way, by the use of His own means. If you will take notice, you will see, in those cases where the assurance was, "Believe on the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved", that, on believing, "Straightway"[1] they were baptized, and *in that way* was the promise made good. And you may remember, too, that this was exactly the way in which our SAVIOUR had *said it should* be made good—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be

[1] Acts, viii. 35–39; xvi. 31–33.

saved". Man is not justified by becoming a disciple of Moses, but by being made a disciple of CHRIST he *is*.[1]

2

We come now to the other good sense of 'Justification by Faith'—that we are justified, not for the *merit of our own works*, but only for the merit *of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST* by faith: faith being opposed not to works but to merit—"it is of faith, that it might be by grace". Not the sufficiency of faith is proclaimed, but the insufficiency of all and everything that is of ourselves. And this is the very sense of the *Article*, "We are accounted righteous before GOD only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST by faith, and not for our own works or deservings". It is "a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort", as the Article says. The bankrupt, and he who is "rich in goods", kneel side by side on the same step—the one may not presume, the other may not despair—there to plead "guilty before GOD", and receive

[1] "Namely, in Baptism, the ordinary instrument of our Justification". John Wesley.—*A Treatise on Baptism.*

"the gift", *as a gift*, "without money and without price". "GOD hath concluded all in unbelief,[1] "all under sin,[2] that He might have mercy upon all. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and "love of GOD. By grace are ye saved through faith, "and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of GOD: "not of works, lest any man should boast. Not by "works of righteousness which we have done, but "according to His mercy He saved us, by the wash- "ing of regeneration and renewing of the HOLY "GHOST. That being justified by His grace, we "should be made heirs according to the hope of "eternal life".

And *here*, again, in astonishment, and in honour of our much-injured LORD, I ask, Because we cannot, may not seek to merit it—*how* does this call upon us to cast aside CHRIST'S ordinances, CHRIST'S commands, CHRIST'S sayings? Because man's own attempts, man's own works, are all too short—do not constitute any ground of claim, may not even be thought of as aiding or helping in the smallest degree CHRIST'S own work—What reason is this, for our setting aside any thing which CHRIST has

[1] Rom. xi. 32. [2] Gal. iii. 22.

commanded, or appointed for us to receive? *Because all the merit is* CHRIST'S, *shall we decline His yoke!* Where do we learn this? Not in S. Paul! Nowhere in the Scripture of truth! Nowhere, indeed! 'Tis but the hasty sentence of poor erring man—the sour fruit of contention.[1] Only in coming to Him for His gifts of grace in penitence, in charity, in truth, doing so far as may be what He bids us, showing in all things a loving care to please Him, can we hope to receive anything of His hands. Coming otherwise, surely we come amiss, we ask amiss, and willing as He is to give, cannot hope to receive aught of His most gracious bounty. Obedience in will, the anxious desire to please Him, passing by no opportunity, is surely the least that

[1] Works *are* un-Evangelical, namely, to those who have an un-Evangelical way of looking at them.

They may be viewed, not, as done from without, something to bring with us, by way of making terms, and recommending ourselves to Divine favour: but, as our *subjection* "not in word and in tongue, but in *deed* and in truth," to a wronged yet loving MASTER—coming at once under His yoke, in willing obedience.

If *this* is to be un-Evangelical, most gladly do we bear the reproach. Set forth in any other way, Works *are* un-Evangelical, and *so too*, be it remembered, *is Faith*. All is nothing: CHRIST is "all, and in all."

He would see in those who bend a knee before Him and call upon His Name. Poor we are indeed, all our past squandered, but in *His* sight is present penitence nothing, obedience nothing, love nothing, springing, as they do, "of faith" in Him, "the inspiration of His SPIRIT"? Nothing, indeed, for us to found a claim upon; nothing for us to plead, except so far as His own gracious permission goes; but, *without which*, He will most surely send us away empty. Was it not so the Magdalen came with her service of love, and Zacchæus offering reparation, and the dying Thief with his zealous defence, and Saul of Tarsus with his prompt obedience—"LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do"? And all that ever were justified—all that we read of in the New Testament—'*What* good thing' did any one of them ever withhold of what they could do? what ordinance of CHRIST, appointed for them, did they ever pass by? "Justified freely by His grace", and not for any merits or deservings of ours, yet we bring all, we give all—our hearts, our tongues, our hands, our feet—that He may possess all, Who merits all.

Without these dispositions of the soul, manifested in every act, outward as well as inward, faith is an arrogant offence, and the stronger it is the

more dishonouring it is, to that Blessed Long-suffering SPIRIT Who worketh in the members of CHRIST. The truth is, faith is just the one grace which will *least bear isolation.* Repentance, a broken and contrite heart, crushed down by its weight of woe, attracts CHRIST: even as when we were without GOD and without hope, CHRIST came to save. Forgivingness is so pleasing to Him that it is made the very hinge[1] of His forgiveness. Love has CHRIST'S love, it is His love enkindled in the creature. Obedience, even when it has no higher source than godly fear, wins somewhat of CHRIST'S love, too—"Master, all these have I kept from my youth up. Then JESUS beholding him, *loved* him". But *faith*, when it is alone, is hateful, repulsive, and that only. To believe and not to obey, not to love, is to be at one with devils, for whom the fires of hell are kept for ever burning. With contrition, charity, obedience, faith is the root and strength of them all; by itself, alone, it is not simply without value, it is the sure mark of reprobation. But unworthy to be called faith, for (with that one exception to be avoided) it does not answer to anything which is so called in the New

[1] S. Luke, vi. 37.

Testament. Yes, faith alone, is not faith: without works, without obedience, without keeping CHRIST'S commandments, it can no more be accounted faith, than charity without works can be accounted *charity:* "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone". These *works* are charity. It is so of all graces. It is so of *love:* "Love not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth". Such *deeds* are love, and make it to be 'in truth'. And faith is to be understood in like manner—not as a bare persuasion of the mind, but as an active principle which has works; and which, without such works as are the proper outcome of it, is no faith at all. Just as *Repentance,* again, is no repentance without the leaving-off of those sins of which it repents, and the 'doing of works[1] meet for repentance'. This is the very character of Evangelical repentance, in that it is a repentance that *works:* "What carefulness it *wrought* in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves,

[1] Acts, xxvi. 20.

yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!" In the Corinthians it wrought these, and therefore, the Apostle says, "I rejoice", "ye sorrowed after a godly sort". And so faith *is* accounted of by our Blessed LORD—"And they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and JESUS *seeing* their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee"—and by the Apostle Paul, in that glowing account of faith and works of GOD'S worthies in the XIth chapter of the *Hebrews:* their faith was in their works, their works were their faith, "faith working by love". 'Their *works* were their faith'—as much so as the rising stem, and the filling ear, and the ripening grain in the ear, are *the corn* which the farmer sowed, and looks to reap. Nothing to him is the root hidden from the sight of man, if it be 'alone'; unless it throws out, as part and parcel of itself, the fruit which is of value. If alone, it is dead, worthless: "Even so faith without works, is dead, being alone".

As well may you make charity a feeling, love a sentiment, repentance an emotion, obedience a willingness, as you may make faith a mental act, with-

out works. Without works it is unprofitableness itself: if living, if true, it will operate, it will work or it dies: in works it lives, and moves, and has its being.

These are the 'works' which S. James calls for—the works which faith has; and *this* is the 'faith' which S. Paul calls for—the faith which has these works: both are of CHRIST, and both are one. *Here meet all in harmony*—S. Paul and S. James, our LORD and the disciples. Nevermore may you be surprised that S. James says, "Ye see how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"; else should you be surprised to hear S. Paul saying, "In CHRIST JESUS neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but the keeping of the commandments", "faith working by love". For this is the very true word of CHRIST Himself, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments": the commandments being summed up by Him in this saying, "Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD, 'and Him shalt thou serve'; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." By these works is faith made perfect; without them, it is dead, being alone.

I *know* what some of you are thinking, I know what some of you would say,—'What you have said

is true, but you have not touched the point after all. The point is this—We are not justified, indeed, by faith *which is alone*, but *by faith alone* we are'. I allow the distinction. 'Faith', you would say, 'is the only ingredient of efficacy, but without combination it remains inert; faith requires repentance to succeed, but it is itself the *alone instrument* of justification.' But this, also, I deny. Justification (I use the word in its loose, inexact sense,) justification, pardon, grace, is ministered to us *from without;* it is not wrought by faith which is within. The instrument of Justification is outside of man, and not in the sinner's own hands. He must go to another for it. It is a "gift" to him who comes in faith and penitence, by the hands of another; by the ministry of the Divine CHRIST, or by the same ministry exercised by His servants. By the ministry of CHRIST or His servants while He was upon earth, but by the ministry of His servants alone since He ascended up on high. Now I know the opposition which this will excite in many minds; but, dear brethren, I beg you to be patient: as receivers of a gift which we in no way deserve, we may not be dictators. Whatever way GOD chooses by which to impart His gifts of grace, *that* is best. And to see what that way is, we

must go to Holy Scripture, and by it be guided. But to make all sure, let me first say this—I suppose we do not now need any new Revelation, nor any supplement to the one we have, nor any addition to the many instances we have showing *how it is* that GOD imparts His grace. I suppose what we have is sufficient, that there may be no doubt about it: at least, those who maintain, as I do, the sufficiency of Holy Scripture, cannot deny this. Then look at the instances—look at those who received the gift of GOD, and mark how it was made their own. For of them I say this, *none ever received it by the exercise of his own faith:* faith was exercised, wrought oftentimes up to its highest pitch, but yet, so far, the blessing remained to be imparted. It was the *next step* in the process, an act, an utterance, *from without*, which filled them with joy past all speech, by which the Divine blessing was given and made their own. *Baptism* to S. Paul, the Philippian Jailor, the Ethiopian Eunuch; the *absolving voice* to Mary Magdalen, the dying Thief, the incestuous Corinthian. Grace flowed freely to all who bowed in penitence to receive it, but to none other, and in no other way than that of CHRIST'S channel.

But in opposition to this, men put *their own*

faith: as if salvation came of their faith! as if faith could win, in a manner earn, and recover of itself, the possession which Adam lost! "GOD hath concluded all in *unbelief*, 'all under *sin*', that He might have mercy upon all". "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of GOD." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the HOLY GHOST". Truer, infinitely truer, are these passages than they are commonly allowed to be: they estop everything on the human side towards the act of justification; man can do nothing, absolutely nothing, towards putting himself in possession. He can come in faith, in penitence, with all the requisite conditions, but there he must stop, as a beggar at a gate. Not the faith of all the saints will admit him further; *nothing of his own:* and faith is his own—his own act, his own work; as much his own work as obedience is, as love is, as penitence is, for all are CHRIST'S, "the inspiration of His SPIRIT." It is "not of works lest any man should boast": and man *can* and *does* boast his faith; but the key of admission, the instrument, it is too humiliating to ask for—and, to be turned by another! and he, per-

haps the meanest of GOD'S servants! He boasts his faith, and disparages the instrument; he boasts that he can open by his own faith, the instrument too often he would reject, trample under foot. Just this pride of heart it is that GOD will bring down. He who sues for admission must let the bolt be turned for him; the receiver must be content simply to receive. As the water fell, Naaman's leprosy was cleansed; as it streamed over the leprous of soul, Saul's sins were washed away.

Now comes man's sneer, (Oh that human scorn should follow so close upon Divine love!) '*Sacramental* Justification! *By faith* are ye saved, not by Sacraments'—setting asunder and in opposition what CHRIST hath joined together! I suppose none knew better than S. Paul, what place to give to faith: he is the very Apostle who magnifies its office, who sets faith on the ruins of man's works of merit; but of the opposition between faith and sacraments for salvation S. Paul knew nothing. *One thing* he knew—that both had worked sweetly together for his own peace: while yet in the throes of the new birth, crying, "LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?" he receives for answer, "Arise, and be baptized and *wash* away thy sins, calling on the Name of the

LORD." And speaking his experience in after years, he says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the *washing* of regeneration and renewing of the HOLY GHOST." This is S. Paul, and if he speaks so, how shall our speaking be different? CHRIST makes His own requirements, and appoints His own means, and our part, in nothingness, in helplessness, is to embrace both, praising GOD for His unspeakable gift.

I do very much fear that in our disputings about faith and works, we are in greatest danger of forgetting CHRIST: for these disputings are bred of our looking away from CHRIST as the sole Author of our Salvation. In the Salvation merited by CHRIST our works are nothing, our faith is nothing; neither alone, nor united, do they work out the least part of that gift which He gives in what manner and at what time He will. They do but *plead:* and as the alms and prayers of Cornelius came up before GOD, the memorial of a heart which waited for GOD'S grace; so faith and the works of faith plead before Him, and not in vain.

So far, faith, faith alone, has in it no sufficiency:

and if not at the *entrance* of our religious life, then certainly nowhere else.[1] Henceforth S. Paul says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is GOD Which worketh in you both to will and to do". And so we do: and by Him Which worketh in us. Yet even now with no idea of merit. Poor souls! that have such a low conception of our Holy Calling that in every service of love they see need to caution us against seeking 'Salvation by works'. Our works are the motions of GOD'S gift of grace, the pulsations of the divine life within, the operations of the Divine SPIRIT given to us; and which GOD crowns at length with the gift of eternal life. In caring for these, we are thinking of our FATHER in Heaven, Who created and redeemed us for Himself, that we might be "a peculiar people, zealous of good works". "For we are His workmanship created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works". We are His soldiers, and we delight

[1] We do not 'work out our salvation' *unto* Justification, but—and carefully is it to be remembered—we do work unto salvation *from* justification. The grossest of all perversions of Scripture truth, (and yet one everywhere common,) is taking passages which are of works *before* Justification, and applying them to the Christian life *after* Justification.

to do Him service; we are His servants, and we delight to give Him honour; we are His children, and we delight to please Him.

But, verily, there is a reward; and this the Divine way thereto, and the end thereof eternal life, even the salvation of our souls:

"If thou wilt enter into LIFE, *keep the commandments.*"

"To them who by patient *continuance in well-doing* seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal LIFE."

"Charge them who are rich in this world *that they do good, that they be rich in good works;* laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal LIFE."

"Blessed are they that *do His commandments,* that they may have right to the tree of LIFE."

Here I stay. Nothing of my own to these sentences of Holy Writ do I presume to add: for nothing can be added to their force; nothing may man dare to take away. (Rev. xxii. 19.)

VII.

ASSURANCE.

INSTRUCTION.—That Assurance is sure, only as it is evidenced by the Motions and Fruits of the Spirit.

There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. viii. 1.

'I KNOW that for CHRIST'S sake my sins are forgiven me'; 'I *know* — the SPIRIT bearing witness with my spirit — that "the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the SON of GOD, Who loved me and gave Himself for me".' I see nothing presumptuous in such an assurance; nothing unreasonable; nothing exceeding what every Christian should be able to rejoice in saying. To *doubt* whether we can have such an assurance, is to doubt the efficiency of

GOD'S Instrument of justification; or else, (as in the latter instance,) it is to ignore the difference between Nature and Grace.

Having said this on the one hand, I must in fairness allow on the other, that *these* are not the grounds, either one, alone, or both of them combined, on which men do commonly rest their Assurance. They are careful to let us know that they 'attach nothing to Sacraments', while the difference between nature and grace is, in them, generally, so lamentably small, that for Assurance they go off to something else, most frequently their own feelings, and rest on them. Of such an assurance, however confidently professed, I allow the *reasonableness* of doubt. Every one is bound to doubt it, vaunting itself apart from the only sure evidence — the SPIRIT of grace bearing witness by His works of grace.

Now on both these grounds—because men profess an uncertainty about Assurance, and also, because men profess an uncertain Assurance — I am concerned to point out the teaching of Scripture on a subject so comfortable, if true, and so dangerous, if false, as *personal* ASSURANCE. [Do Thou, O Blessed SPIRIT, anoint our eyes that we may see.]

In Holy Scripture, Assurance is of two kinds:

One is from GOD'S free *gift* of grace, the other is from the *increase* which cometh of that grace. The one *given* to us from without in GOD'S Ordinance, the other *wrought* in us within by His SPIRIT. Quite distinct, the one from the other, and complete each in itself. One the work of a moment, the other ordinarily the work of years. One at the beginning of our Christian course, and afterwards at intervals, in completed acts; the other a daily growing grace from beginning to end. One, GOD'S seed-sowing and planting in the heart; the other, that which springeth of the same — thirty, sixty, a hundred fold.

The two are shown in their fullest measure in S. Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. In the *beginning* of his course — "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins": in that moment of Baptism he stood clear of all, and accepted in The BELOVED; in the *end* — "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." I suppose that none of us could wish for a better assurance, than that *first* — of our sins being washed

away ; or, than that *second* — that full of glory, in which the hand, as it were, touches the very circle of the crown. These are the two kinds of Assurance which we may lawfully look for, and hope to attain to : and beside them there is none other. The first is of GOD'S promise attached to His Ordinance, complete as soon as received ; the second is by growth and increase all our life long. The first at its highest perfection the moment it is given ; and, under the law of decrease and decay, in our passage through this evil world, requiring repeated renewals. The second begins as a hidden working, to go on with constant increase; until it culminates in "such an one as Paul the aged", "now ready to be offered".

And as we have in S. Paul the clearest example of both, so also it is in his teaching that we have the clearest combined statement of both : "There is now no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS, (that is the first[1]) who walk not after the flesh, but after the SPIRIT"; (that is the second) — the second making sure the first. Here, on GOD'S gift and on the SPIRIT'S working, the soul may rest

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 13 ; Gal. iii. 27.

securely; and, because it rests on GOD, it cannot deceive itself.

Of these two kinds of Assurance, *Which is it that you want?* which do you now need? Both are good; one for the time, but the other for all time. Both are good; but one grows dimmer and dimmer the further you go on from its first bright joy — by sins committed, by opportunities missed, by grace lost, till you reach a point where all is obscurity and darkness: the other by a contrary process — of sins subdued, of victories gained, of grace won — grows clearer and clearer, brightening more and more unto the perfect day.

'Which of these two' — it is *the last:* and for three reasons. The last makes sure the first, and assurance of grace is doubly sure; the last it is which concerns you just now; the last it is, according to which judgment will go forth at last. Not then will you be asked, Whether you have ever been baptized, Whether you have ever been converted, Whether, in your life-time, you ever received GOD'S gift of grace; but, What has that grace done for you? Has it renewed your life? Have you co-operated with it? Has it brought forth in you its proper fruits? Alas! to say, 'I was a converted man', 'I was a

baptized Christian', 'I had faith', 'I had the New Birth', is to pronounce the heaviest part of many a soul's condemnation. The question returned to you, will be, *What was your life?* with so great grace given, it should have been a good life! Was it good, and holy? GOD, Who bestowed on you these graces, will not ask whether you *had* them; the question will go beyond that—the LORD Who comes now to reckon with you, and to receive His own with usury, will ask, simply, What have you *done* with them?

Now, let us turn to Holy Scripture, and draw from its stores all that we require for illustration and proof. Of the *first* kind of Assurance, the Bible gives us many examples. S. Paul we have mentioned already. Resting on the Divine Word and Ordinance, he knew that his sins were washed away. The same assurance had the Philippian Jailor and the Ethiopian Eunuch. They being baptized — one "went on his way rejoicing", and also the other "rejoiced, believing in GOD with all his house". Mary, who knelt in penitence at JESUS' feet, washing them with her tears — she had it, in the gracious word, "Her sins which are many are all forgiven". Zacchæus, the publican, "This day is salvation come

to thy house". And besides these were many others, "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee", carried blissful assurance into many hearts, till then most weary and heavy laden. They received the gift, and were wondrously happy in the immediate enjoyment of it. That was their *first* Assurance. That, I doubt not, you have received. Many, like these, can tell the *time*, perhaps the *place*. Many treasure in their memories a peace given, made their own, passing all understanding. But to one, one alone, was given an assurance exceeding far that of all others—"To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise". With Me—in Paradise! Oh, marvellous love of GOD! that was good—not for the time, but—for all time! that leaped across the dark gulf and anchored itself on the bright shore beyond! The LORD having begun, He also made an end. He "finished the work, and cut it short in righteousness"; and "he, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time". Nothing more could he require, nothing more might GOD'S grace do: and with this only word, the first and also the last, his freed spirit quitted his transfixed body to enter at once with his LORD the glorious 'kingdom' of His redeemed. This, as it differed from all other

cases, then, so it differs from all ordinary cases, now. Where life is lengthened out, the work of grace is lengthened out too; and we must *pass on*, from this assurance of grace *given*, to another assurance which is equally required. We must know, not merely that we have received GOD'S grace, but that His grace *remains* in us — a treasure inviolate, leaven leavening the whole lump. After a man has received grace, (in whatever way,) there is only one test given him whereby he may *know* that it is retained, and that is, by the renewal which it works in his life, within and without.

It should be considered worthy of notice, that the Church preserves this distinction, and speaks on the subject with the utmost clearness and precision. First she insists on an Assurance connected with the due reception of the Sacraments: "They be certain *sure witnesses*, and *effectual signs* of grace"; "by the which GOD doth work invisibly in us"—"whereby, as by an instrument", grace is wrought, and "*visibly signed and sealed*": "A means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to *assure* us thereof". But she does not further dwell upon that: that is the Assurance of faith — faith in GOD'S Word and Ordinance. It must also be perceived and felt. We

must in due time have certain experience of it: grace given must be quickening, or we are but 'dead'. "If the SPIRIT of Him that raised up JESUS from the dead *dwell* in you, He that raised up CHRIST from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His SPIRIT that dwelleth in you". It is to this, now, she points: "Such as *feel in themselves the working of the SPIRIT of CHRIST*, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things"[1]—these she bids rejoice; these *know* their Election in CHRIST; and "full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort" it is to them. This is *full Christian Assurance:* our second Assurance making sure our first.

All the Analogies of Holy Scripture teach the same thing. They show the *first* Assurance when we are brought to CHRIST and receive grace; the *second* when we 'follow Him in the way', walking and leaping and praising GOD. How did the Blind Man of Bethsaida know? He knew when CHRIST "took him by the hand": in undertaking his case CHRIST gave the promise, there could be no failure

[1] *Art.* xvii.

then. But presently he had greater assurance than that: he knew because he *saw:* first darkly—"men as trees, walking"—at length, "every man clearly"; and he could say indeed, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see". And the Woman, "twelve years diseased with an issue of blood"—How did she know? She knew because she "touched" CHRIST: that touch her faith assured her was unto life. But at length she had the witness in herself: "She *felt in her body* she was healed of that plague". All was righted within. The fearful drain upon her life was stanched, and the functions of health resumed their course. And that "Daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years!"—How does she know? (Thank GOD, even as many know, now.) By the chains which bound her being snapped asunder, and by an *upright walk* before GOD and men.

There is something here very much to be observed, and 'very necessary for these times': This, our second Assurance, is not a voice—'Thy sins are forgiven thee'; not, this time, an act of grace upon us *from without;* not the 'seed' which the SON OF MAN sows. It is not the 'joy' wherewith

it is received; it is not a feeling, or an impression, or a persuasion, as to ourselves. We have 'greater witness' than this — *the working of grace within;* the SPIRIT of grace giving witness of Himself by His works of grace—'bearing witness of Himself to our spirit' by His holy motions and promptings, working within us 'both to will and to do of His good pleasure': bringing forth in us, and showing forth outwardly before men, those works of light which men see and behold, and for which they do glorify our FATHER Which is in heaven. Most sweet and comforting is this assurance—this knowledge of grace in our members, moving us continually to love and obedience, and to 'do always those things that please Him'.

And it is also very much to be observed that the Divine SPIRIT in Holy Scripture gives the whole weight of its testimony to this assurance—to this, and to none other. All else, of whatever pretensions, is uncertain, and must endure the application of a *test.* Our feelings must be tested, our faith must be tested, our New Birth, our Conversion, must be tested; and *one thing is to test them*—the motions, the works, of our new life, of the SPIRIT of grace within. These, where they are brought forth,

where love is, where obedience is, make all else safe: without, all is vain.—

"*Hereby do we know* that we know Him, if we keep His commandments".

"He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him".

"He that doeth good is of GOD". "He that abideth in the doctrine of CHRIST".

"Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him".

"Every one that loveth is born of GOD, and knoweth GOD".

"He that loveth his brother abideth in the light".

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren".

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the SON of GOD, *that ye may know* that ye have eternal life".

Yea, (let GOD be true!) '*hereby do we know*'. Turning aside from such assurance as GOD *wills* men to have, they become the prey and sport of their own idle imaginings. Fancy a shivering wretch, whose work lies unheeded at his feet, while he stands debating the question, Whether he is hot or cold! Yet this has its exact spiritual parallel

in the wail of those whose ears are closed to the Divine Voice—

> "'Tis a point I long to know,
> Oft it causes anxious thought:
> Do I love the LORD, or no?
> Am I His?—or am I not?"

the beloved Disciple makes answer, Yea, the LORD returns answer for Himself: "*This* is the love of GOD, that we keep His commandments"; "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, *he* it is that loveth Me". For what are these commandments? by our LORD'S own showing, they are the supreme love of GOD, and of our neighbour as ourselves, "not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth": the self-consuming spirit of love—"charity out of a pure heart, which is the end of the commandment", *i. e.*, what the commandment leads to and ends in. 'Greater' is this than all gifts and graces besides, and without this, all else is 'nothing'. *Hereby do we know*, "by the SPIRIT Which He hath given us", by these motions to love and obedience, by these works which He brings forth in us. The motion comes not from us! the strength comes not from us! it is not *we* that do the works, but the SPIRIT of our FATHER, He doeth the works. "In

me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing"; and hence, the very certainty of our Assurance "that they are wrought in GOD". Here self-deception is impossible: Satan never counterfeits these; nature cannot produce them: he that *loves, obeys*, and *doeth the will* of GOD, has unerring testimony, that "GOD dwelleth in him and he in GOD". *By these works we know:* from them arises an infallible assurance that we are trees of the LORD'S planting; that we are no wild stocks, but that GOD'S SPIRIT of grace is within us, bringing forth that which is beyond nature. "Full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort", indeed, are these motions unto them that are led thereby. They *know* that they are in CHRIST the True Vine: and that not only, but that, of His goodness, they are 'fruitful branches' therein, and not those ready to be gathered out and 'burned'. *They can say* — the SPIRIT bearing them witness — "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the SON of GOD, Who loved me and gave Himself for me". "LORD, Thou wilt ordain peace for us; for Thou also hast wrought all our works in us". "There is now no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the SPIRIT".

2

Truly, they know not what they do, who *unhinge* Assurance from this, its only sure ground; who set it adrift to float itself on mere impulses, the frames, feelings, emotions, mental experiences, joys, transports, of our very emotional nature: all as uncertain, as fluctuating, often as transitory, as the thousand and one things which create them: which may be but phantasies and deceits; and which, *if true*, are true only as the glitter or shadow of precious substance within. Those who choose it, and give themselves up to such assurances, are carried hither and thither, "they go up as high as the hills, and down to the valleys beneath", without being anything furthered. Or, *to know* that they have gained ground, they have it to measure by the motions of grace within and their own correspondence therewith — thus by the mercy of GOD being brought back again to the only safe footing on which Assurance may rest. The indwelling SPIRIT, and not simply as dwelling within, but as being to us *a quickening* SPIRIT, *renewing both heart and life* — this is the basis of all sound Christian Assurance. A hope which rests not upon this is the hope of a lunatic: at

best, it is a hope which is no criterion whatever of the soul's condition before GOD. As it claims *not to depend upon* the motions of the new life, so then, of course, it can yield no indication of it. A sick man may have a confident hope of life, but if his confidence is not grounded upon the motions of returning health, it does not show that he is getting well; it indicates only the fact that he feels such a hope.

> "Hope is immortal—
> It springs spontaneous in the human breast",

and comfortable, very comfortable, as this hope undoubtedly is, it may but conceal an awful truth: in daily occurring instances, as we know, the sickness is unto death.

And if our spiritual Assurance is of this character, that is, if it is made *not to depend upon* our growth in grace, then here is the explanation of that which oftentimes is so sore a puzzle—A man falls into sin, even continues in sin, yet his assurance remains bright as ever it was! And from this to another thing there is but a hair's breadth: with this assurance, he is less troubled on account of sin, less careful about his practice; he falls back upon it, and draws comfort therefrom. Whereas a true

assurance has the exact opposite effect: the more *confidence* a man has in his election of GOD, the more *diligence* he gives to make his calling and election sure; the more he *feels* the SPIRIT within, working in him 'both to will and to do', the more he *applies* himself to work out his salvation with fear and trembling. Being "alway confident", says S. Paul, "*therefore we labour* that we may be accepted of Him". And does not this explain also another well-known phenomenon: a man who is no worse and no better than his neighbours, (and no different, except that he has this feeling of assurance,) high-minded, censorious, uncharitable, self-pleasing, unloving — traits of character the very opposite of the mind of CHRIST, and what is wrought by the SPIRIT — yet he goes on his way rejoicing, and knows no fear: While another, most humble, chastened, charitable, self-denying, loving, tender — walking (so far as man compassed with infirmity, may,) as CHRIST also walked — lives in fear and self-reproach all his days, with very trembling hopes of acceptance! How is this? At first sight we are perplexed, and we say, 'It points clearly to some mistake in the estimate they take of their respective conditions'. So it does: but the painful mystery is not hereby

explained. It points, in the former case, to the fact already dwelt upon — that the Assurance is *not based on* any such estimate at all. The assurance is the assurance of confidence alone, independent of the fruits of the SPIRIT. It is not tested and tried by these, (much less does it depend on them,) consequently it is in no way lessened by what a careful self-scrutiny would reveal — the presence of much tolerated sin, and altogether a low, a very low, spiritual condition. But in the other case it *is* measured by these, and therefore, is depressed and sobered: and what Assurance amounts to in such case is just this — a most comfortable certainty that the Blessed SPIRIT is in us, enabling us; together with that just cause for mourning and self-reproach, that our increase in the fruits of the SPIRIT is so little, our advance in grace so painfully slow and inadequate. Yes: this strong growing sense of unworthiness coupled with the happy consciousness of GOD'S work in us, is just the Assurance *which is of the SPIRIT:* and then it goes hand in hand with great humiliation, deep life-long repentance, and continual fear. Hence, too, is the explanation of that paradox which men of a flaunting profession are not slow to pity as a mark of inferiority in the Church-

man's religion: "It is, that the greater our advance in holiness, the deeper ever is our sense of sinfulness; that their repentance is the most earnest who seem to need it least; that the conscience is more sensitive in proportion as it is less burdened. It is, that the same POWER Who sanctifies, also convinces of sin, evidencing His presence by either operation alike; the same heavenly light it is, streaming into the recesses of our hearts, disclosing the secret springs of evil, and the mystery of their natural corruption — which throws its radiance over the path of the just as it shineth more and more unto the perfect day."[1]

Dearly beloved — With this, you do not need a better assurance. The Assurance for *you* to delight in, is not, counting backwards, that so many years ago you knew your sins forgiven, and thence to infer present grace; nor, looking forward, that you shall go to heaven when you die. You may have both these, and be a worse man for having them: nay, if this is your Assurance, you are even *likely* to be the worse for having it; for you are likely, on this very account, to be giving over your "labour, that" you "may be accepted of Him". A good Assurance is

[1] Bp. Jackson.

concerned always with *present operations of grace* — it depends on our "walking after the SPIRIT", on our being "led by the SPIRIT": by this it measures itself; according to this, as a true spiritual barometer, it rises or falls.

But unquestionably, the gravest evil, the irreparable mischief of a bad Assurance is just this — it is accepted as *final:* no necessity is allowed of submitting it to any test; as GOD'S voice to the soul, it is held to override every thing which might shake it. Not springing from Scripture, it refuses the test of Scripture; not springing from the motions of grace, it refuses to be tested by them; not springing from any evidence which GOD has given us whereby to try and prove ourselves, it refuses to be tried by any: and so remains, because untried, *unproved;* bearing witness to itself: a condition of mind, on this very account, so desperate, that for it I know of no earthly help or remedy. This — a false assurance — is, of all things in the world that which is most to be dreaded: Worse far than sin, even of the grossest kind: that may be repented of, and done away; this is the soul's sleeping draught, which ends only in death.

Let this, then, be well kept in mind. *A feeling of assurance* is only then to be depended upon when it

springs from the SPIRIT of grace at work in our members. The mere fact of having a confident hope determines nothing. "Be ready always to give . . a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." It is of the very essence of a good Assurance that it *can* give a good *account* of itself. And it does not utter platitudes, and call them reasons. "CHRIST died": Yes, CHRIST died; but that is as true for all men as it is for myself. The question, if it be raised, is on this wise — 'What reason have I for believing that that avails for me?' And the answer is like — 'Because I perceive in myself the fruits of our Redemption'. An answer which requires to be given in "meekness", considering that "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is GOD"; and "fear", lest we should "frustrate the grace of GOD", and be those "whose fruit withereth".

And the same is to be said of 'joy', which is so much relied on. Joy naturally attends Assurance, and is inevitably of the same character, be it good or bad. The man who *thinks* he is heir to a vast estate is as happy in the contemplation of it as the man who is. While the mistake lasts, the joy of recovering a lost jewel is equally great, whether it is

the real one, or a counterfeit which the thief left in its place. Joy, of itself, determines nothing. 'But, joy is the fruit of the SPIRIT!' So indeed, joy is: but the fruit of the SPIRIT is not one, but many — "The fruit of the SPIRIT is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance". When in this good company, joy is *indeed joy:* but out of it, a deceit and a snare. The absence of these attendant fruits of the SPIRIT is conclusive proof that the 'joy' is not of GOD.

'But, we can cry by the SPIRIT, "Abba, Father"!' So, too, can the prodigal! "Because ye are *sons*, GOD hath sent forth the SPIRIT of His SON into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father". It is the witness of adoption, of sonship, not of effectual grace. "The SPIRIT beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of GOD": it belongs to the *first* Assurance; it must be followed and made perfect by the second. It is because of our *relationship* to Him, that we cry, "Abba, Father", not because we are *pleasing* to Him. The most touching instance in the New Testament, we have, is of one who was far-off indeed from his father's house: "When he came to himself", when he awoke in his sin and folly to a sense of his sonship — the spirit of a son working in

him and moving him to repentance — and said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, *Father*". May yours as surely lead you there! there to abide in His love and service, never more to quit it.

One last word to all — however unworthy they count themselves, and indeed are — who yet *know*, by the motions of grace, that they have the SPIRIT; "Which also helpeth our infirmities". "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven". Rejoice that the SPIRIT of grace is at work in your members. It is the SPIRIT of your FATHER, in you, striving to bring His good work to a perfect finish. Rejoice, rejoice greatly; and "give all diligence to make your calling and election sure". "*Fear*", like S. Paul, lest after all you "should be a cast-a-way". And, like S. Paul, be "*confident* of this very thing, that He Which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of JESUS CHRIST". Moving on these two wheels, your life shall be borne upward and become heavenly: and while you trust, as if all depended on faith; and labour, as if all depended on works; let your cry of prayer unceasing, be, "*Stablish the thing, O GOD, that Thou hast wrought in us*".

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